

C I T I Z E N B O N A P A R T E

1794—1815.

THE STORY OF A PEASANT.

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THE STORY OF A PEASANT.

BY

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*Authors of "Year One of the Republic," "The Conscript," "Waterloo,"
"The Alsacian Schoolmaster," &c. &c.*

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CHAPTER I.



HAVE told you all about our campaign in La Vendée, which the Vendéans themselves called the great war. We have exterminated the race of wretches on both sides of the Loire, but three-fourths of our men had left their bones there. All we have seen since was not in any degree so desperate.

The remnant of Vendéans after the affair of Savenay had escaped into the marshes along the shore, where their last chief, the famous Charette, still held his ground. This adroit partisan would never fight a regular battle; he plundered all the farms and villages near the marshes, carrying off oxen, cows, hay, straw, and all he could lay his hands on. The unfortunate peasants, deprived of everything, ended by always joining his standard, and so the civil war was kept alive.

The 18th demi-brigade and the other troops quartered in the environs of Nantes, Amiens, and Angers sent out strong detachments to try and surround this bandit chief; but as our columns approached he immediately retreated. And you may believe they were not so stupid as to follow him among the willows, reeds, alders, and other undergrowth where the Vendéans were lying in ambush for them; we should all have been cut off one by one.

Such was our life during January and February, 1794. And now I must get on a little faster; for I am growing old, and I have to tell you what happened for several years up to the end of our Republic, and I wish to forget nothing, particularly what I have seen myself.

It was during one of our expeditions against Charette that I fell ill again. It rained every day; we lay in the water; the Vendéans often cut off our convoys; we were in want of everything. In consequence of privations, sufferings, and forced marches, I began to spit blood again; they were obliged to send me to Nantes with a convoy of wounded.

At Nantes the chief medical officer said I could not live a fortnight. The wounded from the fight at Colombin filled the stairs, the halls, and the galleries of the hospital. I asked for leave to go home.

"You want to see home, my lad?" said the surgeon-major, laughing. "Well, you will soon get leave."

Eight or ten days later he brought me my discharge from the service; another had taken my place in my bed.

Many years have passed since then, the doctor who condemned me has long since escaped the toothache,

and here I am still. Let that be a lesson to the rich and aged who are condemned by the doctors—they may survive them long. I am not the only example of it.

With my discharge and a hundred livres in assignats in my pocket, which Margaret sent very soon when she heard from my letters I was sick in the hospital at Nantes, I took courage and started on my road home. It was in March, when the Terror was at its height and famine was frightful. You must not think the weather was bad; on the contrary, the year promised well; everything was green and in flower—the pear-trees, plum-trees, and apricots were white and pink before the end of April. We could, indeed, have blessed the Creator if we could have carried one-half the harvest we saw growing; but that was still to come, and we had weeks and months to wait before we had it.

I might describe to you villages abandoned, churches shut up, and files of prisoners who were to be seen all along the Loire; the fear of the people who did not dare look at you; the civil commissaries with their scart and their followers, the informer behind examining people; gendarmes and even citizens asking to see your papers at every step.

The Hebertists, who wanted to abolish the Supreme Being, had just been guillotined; their accomplices were sought for everywhere; for we would have no more drunkards, debauchees, or shameless men who denied both justice and humanity: they only talked now about Robespierre and the reign of virtue.

I dragged myself along from one halting-place to another, pale and thin, like some poor creature who has

hardly a breath left in him. Sometimes the peasants I met when they looked at me seemed to say—

“He need not be uneasy, he will never make old bones.”

When I had nearly reached Orleans, the idea came into my head to go and see Chauvel in Paris; it was a sick man's fancy, which clings to anything. I thought, too, that the Paris doctors knew more than the barbers, veterinary surgeons, and dentists who had been sent to our battalions in 1792; besides, Paris was everything; from thence decrees, orders to our armies, gazettes, and the latest news all proceeded. I wanted to see Paris before I died, and about the beginning of April I arrived in its neighbourhood.

I am quite incapable of giving you such a description of this great city as that of Margaret and Chauvel, its faubourgs and barriers, couriers arriving and departing, its streets crowded with people, its troops of ragged wretches, all the din of the carriages and carts, cries of the hawkers of goods and small wares; besides, when I was there alone and ill, extraordinary events were taking place. I knew not what to look at in all this confusion, nor where to go, or whom to ask for. I remember well I went along one busy street, which seemed endless, for more than an hour. Whenever I asked any one for the Rue du Bouloi they replied, “Straight on.”

I thought I should lose my head.

It might have been five in the evening, and it was growing dark, when at last, at the end of this street, facing an old covered bridge, covered with large sentry-boxes in stone, I saw the Seine. Old houses, as far as the eye could reach, along its banks, a large church without any tower rising above them, and innumerable

other buildings. The sun was just setting, and all the old roofs seemed red. While I was looking at this sight, not knowing which way to turn, something frightful passed before me, something so horrible that it makes my old blood boil even now, after the lapse of so many years.

I had already crossed the bridge, and then I saw, among a crowd of scoundrels—who shouted, danced, tumbled over one another, and waved their greasy caps in the air, and brandished their clubs—there, between two strong detachments of mounted gendarmes, three carts full of condemned persons rolled slowly along. In the first cart, painted red, stood two men, in their shirt-sleeves, their chests and necks naked, and their hands tied behind their backs. All the rest of the condemned were seated opposite one another, and looked at one another, utterly prostrated; but these two, one of them a strong, broad-shouldered man, with a large head and sunken and bloodshot eyes, laughed while he set his teeth; one might have compared him to a lion surrounded by barking curs. He looked at them with contempt, and his pendulous cheeks quivered with emotion.

The taller one, spare and pale, tried to speak; he stammered, his lips were covered with froth, he seemed furious.

These things are stamped on my brain; I shall see them to the last hour of my life.

And while the horses and sabres, the red painted carts, and the brutes attending them disappeared, dancing, screaming, and yelling, “Death to the corrupt!” “Ca Ira!” “Let us dance the Carmagnole!” “Your turn, Camille!” “Yours, Danton!” “Ha! ha! ha! long live .

the reign of virtue!" "Robespierre for ever!"—while this horrid sort of dream passed along through the vast crowd of people, leaning out of the windows and balconies all along the river, the next cart comes by as full as the first, and then the third. I remembered that Chauvel was a friend of Danton, and I trembled, for if he had been there, in spite of them all I should have drawn my sword and fallen on the wretches, and found my own death there; but I did not see him, I only saw our general, Westermann, the conqueror of Chatillon, Mans, and Savenay. There he was, he with his hands tied behind his back! looking gloomy enough, with his head on his breast. The same horrible songs, shouts, and laughter followed these two last vehicles.

It is not the thought of death which could make such men tremble, but anger at seeing the ingratitude of the people, who allowed them to be thus insulted and dragged to the guillotine by a set of police spies. These informers had tarnished our revolution; they called themselves sans-culottes, while the people, workmen and peasants, endured the greatest misery. They remained in Paris gloating over their victims, while we by hundreds of thousands were defending our country, and shedding our blood on the frontier.

Some hundred yards farther on I at last found out Chauvel's house. It was dark. I went into a gloomy passage; on the ground floor, on the left was a tailor, at the end of a closet, which was quite filled up by his table; he was an old man with a red nose. I asked for the representative of the people, Chauvel. As soon as I had done so, this man looked me over through his spectacles from head to foot, then he untwisted his crooked legs, and said—

the Story of a Peasant.

“Wait a moment, citizen ; I will go for him.”

He went out, and five minutes afterwards he came back with a short, fat man, with a turned-up hat and a large cockade in front, and a tricoloured scarf round his waist. Two or three sans-culottes followed him.

“Here,” said the tailor, “this is the man who wants Chauvel.”

The other, no doubt a commissary of police, began by asking me who I was, and where I came from. I replied, “Chauvel would know very well.”

“In the name of the law,” said this man, “I require you to show me your papers. Will you do so at once—yes or no?”

The sans-culottes then came in ; I could not move ; I could hear people going in and out of the alley, and up and down stairs, and I saw them looking at me like so many rats ; so, pale with anger, I threw my route of the road and discharge on the table. The commissary took them, and put them in his pocket, saying to me—

“Come along,” and to his men, “and you keep a sharp look-out.”

The tailor seemed pleased. He thought he had his fifty francs reward safe in his pocket. I could have strangled him.

We went out. Fifty yards farther, in a large square hall where the guard was mounted by citizen soldiers, my papers were examined.

At this distance of time it would be impossible to tell you all the questions put to me by the commissary as to my military service, on my change of route home, the manner I had become acquainted with Chauvel, &c. It lasted more than half-an-hour. At last, however, he acknowledged my papers were perfectly regular, and •

told me, as he stamped them, that Chauvel was on a mission to the army of the Alps. Then I got angry, and began by saying—

“Why could not you have told me that at first, you——”

I stopped in time, and the commissary, looking at me with contempt, cried—

“At once! So you ought to have been told at once! Why, you idiot, do you suppose the Republic is going to talk about its affairs to the first comer? Could you not have been a spy of Pitt or Cobourg? Do you carry your certificate of being a good patriot written on your forehead?”

He worked himself up into a rage; if he had made the least sign to the sectionaries who were standing round us listening and leaning on their pikes, I should have been arrested. I had just sense sufficient to hold my tongue; and he, disappointed in his prize, pointed to the door and said—

“You are at liberty, but try not to be such a fool again—it will bring you into trouble.”

I walked off quick enough. All the sans-culottes kept looking suspiciously at me.

For the two days I remained in Paris the same spectacle presented itself; everywhere people were looked on as suspected; the first passer-by could arrest you; people walked along without daring to look at one another. Nor was it without reason—treachery had set this state of things in motion, and want drove these wretches to seek the means of living anywhere. They informed against persons for the sake of the reward! One evil had brought on another; we were in the height of the Reign of Terror, which had originated

with Lafayette and Dumouriez, and all those who had surrendered our fortresses tried to lead their armies against the nation, and to induce the peasants to destroy the Republic. Great evils require strong remedies, so we ought not to be astonished.

Once free from the claws of the commissary, as I walked again up the gloomy street, at last I found one of those inns where beggars and poor devils like myself lodged for a few sous a night. This was what I wanted, for with my old knapsack, old hat, and poor old ragged Vendée uniform, worn and patched as it was, no one would have taken me in elsewhere. So I walked into this pothouse, and the old woman behind the counter, in the midst of a lot of sans-culottes, who were smoking, drinking, and playing at cards, this old woman knew what I wanted directly—she took me up to the top of the house; there was a rope which answered the purpose of banisters. I had to pay in advance, and was then free to lie down on a mattress whence fleas and other vermin soon drove me. I then lay down on the boards, with my head on my knapsack, as I used to do in the field; and in spite of the horrid smell, the shouts of drunkards, the passage of the patrols through the streets, the want of air in this hole under the tiles, and the horrible oaths of those who tumbled up the stairs, I fell asleep and slept till morning.

The idea that Danton, Camille Desmoulins, Westermann, and the best patriots were dead, that their heads were lying one upon another with their bodies in a pool of blood, woke me up two or three times; my heart ached; I blessed Heaven for the knowledge that Chauvel was on a mission to the army, and I fell asleep again from fatigue.

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I went down the next morning early ; I could have gone away at once as I had already paid, but I thought I might as well stay where I was, since I could dine there cheap enough. I sat down all alone. I breakfasted quietly on a piece of bread, some cheese, and about a pint of wine—that cost me two livres ten sous in assignats. I had seventy-five livres left.

I wanted to see the National Convention before returning home. For the three months that we were traversing the Bocage and the Marches we had no news whatever. Almost all the Parisian federals had perished, and they were the only ones who troubled themselves about the great struggles in the Convention between the Jacobins and the Cordeliers—after they were gone we only thought about what we had to do. The deaths of Danton, Camille Desmoulins, and all the patriots who were the first to support the Republic, seemed to me to be something terrible ; could the Royalists, then, have got the upper hand ? Such were the ideas that occurred to me ; and about eight, having paid the old woman what I owed her, I left my knapsack in her charge, and told her I would fetch it away.

I then saw what Margaret had once written to me about Paris—the cries of the dealers, the rows of poor creatures at the bakers' doors, the disputes at the market for what the country people had brought. I saw it all, and it was become worse then—they sang fresh songs, and then hawked about newspapers which spoke of the death of the corrupt.

I remember having crossed a large court planted with old trees—the palace of the ci-devant Duke of Orleans—and seeing a great many people sitting there drinking and reading the gazettes ; they laughed and nodded to

one another, as if nothing unusual had happened. A little farther, on the sign of a sort of open-air saloon, such as I recollect Chauvel opened at home for the convenience of the patriots, having read "reading-room," I walked boldly in and sat down among a number of citizens who never even looked round; there I read the *Moniteur* quite through, and other papers giving an account of the trials of the Dantonists, which only cost me two sous.

The Committee of Public Safety had arrested the Dantonists, as they alleged, for conspiring against the French nation, for desiring to re-establish monarchy and destroy national representation and republican government. They had not been allowed to speak; they had refused to call their witnesses; and when they became indignant, and Danton spoke to the people who sympathised with him, Saint-Just and Billaud-Varennes, representing the Committee of Public Safety before the revolutionary tribunal, hurried to the Convention, saying the accused had revolted, they had insulted justice, and if the revolt extended beyond the doors everything was lost.

These wretches never mentioned Danton's just demands, nor the list of witnesses he asked to have examined according to law!

Saint-Just said a decree only could prevent an outbreak. So this great National Convention, trembling before the Committee of Public Safety, of which Robespierre, Saint-Just, and Couthon had made themselves masters—this Convention, which had stood face to face with all Europe, had decreed that the president of the revolutionary tribunal might use any means to compel the accused to respect public tranquillity, and

even, if necessary, go so far as to put them beyond the pale of the law.

This was exactly what Robespierre wanted.

The next day, without hearing witnesses, nor the public accuser, nor the defence, nor the president, the jury of assassins decided they had heard enough ; they declared Danton and his friends guilty of having attempted to overthrow the Republic, and their judges condemned them to death.

I need not repeat Danton's words, nor those of Camille Desmoulins, nor the other Dantonists—they are repeated in every book which has been written about the Republic. Danton said—"My name is inscribed in the Pantheon of history." He was right. That name is written up on high, and that of his assassins at the bottom. Danton annihilates them. He was the first, the greatest, and the chief of all the men of the revolution ; he had both feeling and intelligence ; his enemies had neither ; they had ruined the Republic, and he had once saved it. As long as an honest man is to be found among us Camille Desmoulins will find friends to lament his fate ; as long as we can number brave men among us the name of Westermann will be respected. But I am now saying things with which every one is acquainted. I had better get on quietly and not excite myself.

After reading the gazettes till my eyes grew dim, I set off for the Convention ; I had only to inquire of the first man I met ; he said—"Down there."

As well as I can remember it was a large building looking into a garden, the staircase under a dome, and the light coming in from the top. Any one was admitted, but it was necessary to be there early to get

a seat in the galleries, ornamented with tricolour standards and painted crowns. I soon found a front seat in one of the galleries. I sat there with my arms on the balustrade. I could see all the benches below in a semicircle one above the other until nearly close to the wall. The tribune was opposite. They ascended the tribune by steps at the sides. Everything was in carved oak. The representatives came in a line and took their places, some on the left and some on the right, above, below, in the centre, which took up nearly an hour. The galleries also were soon filled with the mob in red caps with a little cockade; some of them carried pikes. Their perpetual talking made a buzzing sound under the dome.

While the representatives were arriving the people round me would say—

“There, that’s so and so.”

“That big man, that’s Legendre.”

“And there is Couthon, carried in on a chair by the attendants,”

“Here come Billaud, Robert Lindet, Grégoire, Barrère, Saint-Just.”

And so on.

When I heard Saint-Just’s name I looked over to see him; he was short and fair, very good-looking and well dressed, but stiff and conceited. When I thought of what he had just done, I felt I should like to say a word or two to him in a quiet corner.

These were the men so-called “virtuous,” but we were quite as virtuous as they were, I think, in the trenches of Mayence, on the redoubts and in the mud of La Vendée, without bread, without shoes, and without clothes. I think the people are fools indeed to give

such fine names to such creatures of vanity, and then worship them as immaculate beings.* The spirit of servility is the cause of all this admiration; and it is too much to call such scoundrels "virtuous" for getting rid of greater men, because they are an obstacle in the way of their ambition and their despotism.

Nearly directly afterwards Robespierre arrived. On all sides in the galleries people said, "'Tis he, 'tis the virtuous Robespierre, the incorruptible," &c., &c.

I looked at this man well. He crossed the great hall, and ascended the little staircase opposite, a roll of papers in his hand, and green spectacles on his nose. In contrast to the other representatives, most of whom were in black coats, you would have called him an exquisite—his hair was curled and powdered, he wore a white cravat and white waistcoat, a large shirt-frill and ruffles; you could see that man took as much trouble about his personal appearance, and looked as often in his glass, as a young girl. I was quite astonished when I saw him, but when he turned round, sat down, and began to unroll his papers, without seeming to hear anything, and as I could see him spying over his spectacles at the audience and the members in the hall, then the idea occurred to me that he was like a fox, the cleverest and most cunning of all animals, which are always licking their fur and even their claws.

I said to myself—

"I should never trust you, not even if you were a thousand times more virtuous than they say you are."

* He had hardly taken his seat when the president, Tallien, a fine young man, with a round face, said—

"Citizen representatives, the sitting is opened."

I can still remember that all these people were pale;

they spoke loudly, they even shouted, they made use of fine language, but as soon as they had spoken their features lost their animation, and they became dull. No doubt every one was thinking of what had happened the day before, and perhaps still more of what might possibly occur to-morrow.

One thing put them all in a rage, and that was to see a butcher, or cattle-dealer, make his appearance at the bar of the house, who had been admitted by some officious attendants, and who offered the nation fifteen hundred livres to grease the guillotine, and keep it in repair; he wanted to go on speaking, but they would not let him; they all called out—

“Leave the bar! leave the bar!”

And the same attendants turned him out again.

During this episode Robespierre seemed to be writing, and not attending to what was going on; but as the petitioner went away he called out from his seat—

“The Committee of Surveillance will keep an eye on that man—his conduct must be looked to.”

That was all he said until the evening. His voice was clear, and it could be heard above all the confused noise in the hall.

Directly afterwards more than twenty youths, about fifteen or sixteen years of age, made their appearance in uniform; they were pupils of the School of Music. They walked in very coolly, and the eldest among them began to read a petition that their teachers might be arrested, tried, and guillotined; and they threatened the Convention that, if they were not allowed to do as they liked after school hours, they would all leave their school.

Then the members' indignation was again excited at

these young scoundrels. Tallien, the president, told them very shortly they were unworthy to be the pupils of the nation, as they were too ignorant to understand the duties of Republicans, and then he ordered them to retire.

Then there was a dispute between two representatives; one wanted these mischievous children's words taken down, the other said these young citizens were incapable of having drawn up such a petition, and that it would be better to try and find out the real authors.

His motion was carried.

Then they read the propositions of the Finance Committee and of the Committee of War. The Convention, in accordance with these propositions, passed two decrees, one to fix the price of water carriage on the Saône and the Rhône, by altering the tariff of the stage coaches existing since 1790; the other to brigade and fill up the battalions of the formation of Orleans, drawn from the armies of the North and the Ardennes, and to have them put in the original formation.

All these things interested me; I saw how our laws were voted, and I felt that it was done in an orderly manner.

The laws were voted that day with regard to returning the money paid for appointments about the court of Louis XVI., for before '89 all these employments were bought and sold; the Republic, having abolished them, was desirous of returning the money paid for them, which was but just.

By the same decree it granted assistance, and even pensions, to all the old paid servants of the ci-devant King who from their great age were unable to live by

their work. In this respect the Republic showed itself more just and honest than other governments.

But what riveted my attention was when Citizen Couthon began to speak in the name of the Committee of Public Safety. At a distance you would have taken him for an old woman. He spoke from his seat, being a cripple, with his gewgaws and powdered wig. This is what he said, and it gave me something to think about in this horrible time of terror—he said a decree had been passed the evening before by the Convention to oblige every one of its members to declare the business or profession he followed before the Revolution, what fortune he possessed, and the means by which such fortune had been increased. More than one, I fancy, would have some trouble in giving a similar account now.

He said that this decree had been sent to the Committee of Public Safety for further details; the Committee had given its attention to it immediately; but it had come to the conclusion that this was but the beginning of many other general measures for the purification of public morality, and for that reason it had come to no final arrangement; but that would come in time; the Committee would make a report on the moral influence of revolutionary government, and then another on the objects of the war carried on against the tyrants of Europe; and again another on the duties of representatives absent on missions either to the armies or in the departments, with a view of keeping them more under the control of government; and, lastly, a report or proposal for a fête to the Supreme Being every ten years.

He was listened to with enthusiasm, and from time

to time Robespierre, who never ceased writing, nodded his head, as if to say, "Yes! just so—just so."

After this speech a list was read to the Assembly of prizes taken from the English and Dutch by our marine, which lasted till eight in the evening.

Poor Legendre, who was the only man among them who dared to defend his friend Danton at the Convention, seeing the purification was not yet over, came and said, with an air of satisfaction, that the council-general of the commune of Havre-Marat had sent several addresses to the Convention to thank it for its energy against the conspirators, that it had been forgotten to be noticed, but he was himself very glad to congratulate it on its loyal sentiments. As he spoke he glanced at Robespierre, but this virtuous man, leaning on his desk, did not seem to hear him—he did not nod his head once. Poor Legendre! he must have passed a very bad night.

Then the sitting was closed. All the people in the galleries went down the stairs, the representatives left by the grand entrance below, and I followed the crowd, thinking over all I had heard.

How glad I was to get home, and how tired I was of the extraordinary virtues of men who wanted to have everything in their own grasp—representatives, generals, soldiers, committees, and clubs—who arrange everything, put everything in order, and guillotine without mercy every man who shows the least feeling of pity! I saw well enough how all these measures would end. Robespierre was master then; it remained to see how long it would last, for the blade of the guillotine glittered alike for every one.



CHAPTER II.

THE next day, the 7th of April, 1794, I turned my back on Paris—I had seen enough.

When one man can make all the others tremble; when from what he says one is looked upon as guilty; when proofs, witnesses, and defenders are no more than empty forms; when judges and jury are chosen expressly to send those who are in their way to the guillotine, there is enough said.

I walked off very sad and very ill, covered with dust, for it was very hot.

All along your route at the post-houses they stopped you, looked at your papers, and put their stamp upon them. Robespierre only trusted to his police; nearly all the district judges, administrators, representatives, or inferior mayors, and even the field-keepers, belonged to his police; they constituted, as it were, a nation of spies, who were paid by and lived on the peasants, the workmen, and labourers of all sorts. You may con-

ceive how such insults, renewed at every little town, disgusted travellers.

The eighth or ninth day after passing Châlons I was dragging myself along on the road to Vitry-le-Français ; the perspiration fell in drops off my forehead, and I said to myself—

“Why must we suffer so much in this world before reaching the grave? Why should first one sort of vagabond and then another drive about in his carriage and live on the fat of the land like princes, while honest people perish by slow degrees of fatigue and want?”

I had sat down on a heap of stones, looking at a little village a long way off at the end of the road ; the sun was setting ; I was hungry and thirsty, and I asked myself the question whether I had courage enough to try and get there: In this state of discouragement the noise of a carriage made me look round, and I saw one of those wickerwork country carts, like a large basket, coming along at a trot, an elderly man in a coarse straw hat and grey cloth jacket sitting on the front seat. As he came nearer I could see that he had a kind countenance, large, clear blue eyes, a good mouth, his wig à la Cadogan in a bag behind ; he looked at me and called out first—

“You are tired, citizen ; get up by my side, that will rest you a bit.”

I was quite surprised, and even affected.

“I was about to ask that service of you, citizen,” said I, as he stopped and held out his hand to me ; “I can get no farther.”

“I see that,” replied he. “Do you come from far?”

“I come from La Vendée ; I am ill and discharged

from the service ; walking tires me. I spit blood. If I can only get home to die that is all I ask."

The cart had begun to trot along again, and he looked curiously and kindly at me. Then he said—

" Nonsense, young man, what are you talking about? Have you lost your courage? When one is young one should never despair. I tell you what, all you want is rest, good food, and good wine, and that will set you right, believe me. Hue! hue, Grisette!"

I made him no answer; some moments after he asked me—

" Did you come through Paris, citizen?"

" Yes," said I, " and that made me worse; I have seen things there which have broken my heart. I am quite wretched in consequence."

" What?" said he as he looked at me.

" I have seen the best patriots guillotined—Danton, Camille Desmoulins, my general, Westermann, and all the brave men who had saved us. If I was not so ill as I am, and if I was worth sending to the guillotine, I should not dare to talk as I do now; but let them arrest me if they like, I don't care; the villains would not keep me long; they are an abominable set of scoundrels."

While I was talking, anger and fatigue made me spit up a quantity of blood. I thought—

" All is lost, so much the worse; if he is a friend of Robespierre he can but denounce me."

When he saw that he was silent for a moment, he turned pale, and his great eyes filled with tears, but he said nothing, only telling me to keep myself quiet.

Then I told him all I had seen, with all the details;

the crowd of soi-disant sans-culottes running after the carts, calling out—

“Down with the corrupt!” and the rest.

We were getting near the village, a very poor one; bad houses, with their roofs sinking under the weight of the heavy hollow tiles, and sheds and manure-heaps equally miserable. There was, however, one very good and well-built house, with a garden at the side, before which the carriage stopped.

I got down and thanked the good man, and I was taking my knapsack by the strap when he said to me—

“Come, citizen, you had better stop here; there is not a public-house in the village.”

At the same time a tall spare woman came out of the house, wearing an old-fashioned straw hat; the man, who was still in the carriage, called out—

“This young man is going to stay here to-night; he is a brave boy, and we will have a bottle of wine together; for the rest you must put up with pot-luck.”

I wanted to refuse, but he took me by the shoulder and pushed me gently into the room, saying—

“Come, come, you will please me, my wife, my daughter, and my sister. Henriette, take the citizen’s knapsack, get a good bed ready for him. I will just take the horse out and put him in the stable, and I shall be ready.”

I was obliged to do as he wished; to tell the truth, I was not sorry either, for the house seemed to me the best in the place, and the large room downstairs, with a round table in the middle, and the plates, glasses, and bottles round a straw table-cover, recalled happy times at the Three Pigeons.

The woman having looked at me with an air of sur-

prise, led me into a small bedroom looking over an orchard, and said—

“Make yourself comfortable, monsieur.”

For a long time I had not heard people speak so civilly, and I was rather surprised. As soon as she was gone I took out of my miserable knapsack what better things I had, I washed myself well with soap in a large basin, I changed my shoes, I did all I could, and I went down again. The soup-tureen was already on the table. Another woman, and a very pretty girl about sixteen or seventeen, were there talking to the master of the house.

“Come and sit down, and I will go out and close the shutters.”

I sat down with the ladies; he came in again and helped me, first to a good plateful of vegetable soup, such as I had not even smelt for the last two years, then we had some roast veal, some salad, some nuts, and excellent bread and wine. This family must have been rich. As we were eating, Citizen Lami—there, I have just remembered his name—yes, it was Lami; that goes back to '94; what things have happened since then?—well, the citizen related to the women what I had seen, and how indignant I had felt about it.

It was just at the end of supper; one of the ladies put her apron to her eyes and left the room in tears, and in a few minutes both the others followed her. Then he said—

“Citizen, my sister is married, and lives at Arcis-sur-Aube; she is a friend of the Danton family; she returned here only three days ago, and we all knew the family well; we are much attached to them; I have myself had something to do with George Danton; you may understand how it affects us all.”

He did not tutoyer me any more, and I saw he was ready to burst into tears.

“What a misfortune!” said he—“what a horrible misfortune!”

And then he went out too. I sat there alone for a quarter of an hour, with my heart full. I heard nothing, and then they all came back together, with their eyes red—I saw they had all been crying. The citizen fetched a bottle of old wine, and said to me as he drew the cork—

“Let us drink to the welfare of the Republic, and the punishment of traitors!”

At the same time he filled my glass and his own, and we drank his toast. The ladies having again taken their seats, the sister of Citizen Lami, whose name was Manon, told us how a month before Danton was staying with his mother at Arcis-sur-Aube; that he used to walk about a large room looking over the place, with the doors and windows open; any one could see him, shake hands with him, and ask his advice; workmen, tradespeople, or peasants, he received every one, telling the first man he met what his opinions were, without the least distrust; he often brought his friends with him—Camille Desmoulins and his young wife, his own and his two children, sometimes, too, his father and mother-in-law, Charpentier; they all used to stop with Mdlle. Danton, who had married the Citizen Recordain, a person in business at Arcis-sur-Aube; there were no better people, or more liked, anywhere near than they were.

I could see from what this poor woman told us that Danton's too great confidence had been his destruction; for one can easily see that a man like Robespierre, who

ruled the police, who in the Committee of Public Safety only attended to police affairs, informations, espionage, and conspiracies—which he often contrived himself—one can easily see that such a man would always have two or three of his spies about Danton, to report his words, his complaints, or his threats.

I had read in the papers that Danton had grown stout during his mission in Belgium, and I naturally inquired if Danton was a rich man. She replied the family of Danton had been in easy circumstances before the Revolution, and that since then he seemed neither richer nor poorer. I knew that already, for a man like Chauvel was too shrewd, and had too great a contempt for money himself, to associate with rogues.

I have told you all I can recollect about this affair; and since then I have always been convinced that Robespierre, Saint-Just, Couthon, and all those ambitious, heartless men had bespattered the tomb of that great man with dirt; that they had basely calumniated him, which indeed it was very easy to see, for if they had possessed any proofs whatever, the police-agents, who swarmed all over France, would have published them everywhere, and I am also certain that Westermann's only crime was in their eyes because he had been acknowledged by Danton at the Army of the North as a real general, and been immediately promoted by him from the rank of commandant to that of general in La Vendée.

Westermann, who was one of the most forward citizens in the attack on the Tuileries, the 10th of August, might have raised the people in favour of justice and revenged his friends. The safest plan was to get rid of him, notwithstanding his services and

his patriotism ; and that was what these virtuous men did.

Well, now I have said what I think about these things.

The good people in whose house I was kept me there till the following day ; I breakfasted and dined with them, and then the citizen harnessed his horse and drove me himself as far as Vitry-le-Français. I never met with a man like him, and, therefore, I shall always remember him, and I charge my children to remember him ; his name was Lami—Jean-Pierre-Lami—a true patriot, and one who gave me fresh courage, for he assured me I was not near my end, but that I was sure to recover ; he told me this so simply and so naturally that I began to hope again. Nor would he let me pay him one sou, and he even obliged me to empty a bottle of wine with him, as we came to Vitry-le-Français, which he paid for himself. After that he embraced me like an old acquaintance, and wished me a good journey.

Having left there with more courage than before, I followed Citizen Lami's advice, and took a pint of good wine every day at dinner, even when it was dear, of course considering the state of my purse, for I had still eight or ten days' march before me, in my present state of health. The idea of dying had left me ; I thought about Margaret, my father, and Maître Jean, and I said to myself—

“ Courage, Michel, they are expecting you ! ”

I could see home again, and hear my friends call out—

“ Here he comes ! It is he ! ”

Instead of giving way, of resting on my stick with my back bent, I held myself up, and stepped out ; and

the sight of the desolate state of the country, the complaints of the peasantry taxed to the last farthing, the publication of these taxes in every district, the exportation of corn, the disputes at the shop doors, the arrival of the commissaries of stores and national gendarmes, which I met with in every market town, and the incessant demand for my papers, and the prescribed questions of the innkeepers every night before they would let you have a bed—all these cruel annoyances no longer worried me the least.

I was also sometimes lucky enough to fall in with some farmers' carts, and get a lift for two or three sous; small towns and villages were soon passed after Vitry-le-Français, Bar-le-Duc, Commercy, Nancy, Lunéville. Ah, then the sight of the mountains stirred my heart, those old blue mountains which will be always there when ages will have passed since we were in existence, which our children and grandchildren will see after us, and greet, as we have greeted, when returning from abroad; the heights of Dagsbourg, where a little white chapel has been built since then; and farther to the right the Donon, which is the only one to keep his mantle of snow above the wood. As I drew nearer home the weather was superb.

That day I had left Sarrebourg at four in the morning, and about nine I was on the Mittelbronn side; I could again see the Maisons-Rouges, the higher houses of the Baraques, and the Bois-du-Chênes, and the line of the ramparts. Twenty minutes later I passed through the Porte de France. There is no need to tell you about our meeting—how Margaret cried when she saw how weak I was, and thought how I had traversed the whole of France in that condition to see her again; the

despair of Stephen and my old father, who came directly, for the old man had brought some baskets to sell at the market. These things make me feel, even now, when I think of them. I had hardly sat down in the book-shop, after having suffered so much, and been so strong during my journey, before I felt quite exhausted. I had my father in my arms, when I began to spit blood again in quantities, and for the first time since the fight at Port-Saint-Père I fainted away. They thought I was dead. I woke up in the evening in Chauvel's bed, so weak that I could hardly breathe. Margaret was leaning over me, and crying with all her might. I took her head between my two hands, kissed her, and said—

“ I was right to make haste to see you once more, was I not ? ”

My father was so distressed, he could not stay. However, Doctor Steinbrenner, then a young man, but already very experienced, had told them that my life was in no danger provided I was kept quiet, and had plenty of rest. He advised them not to allow any patriots to see me, for they would not fail to ask for news.

It was then I learnt the strength of Margaret's love, and understood how fortunate I was. Never was any one so well attended to as I was. Day and night Margaret watched me and nursed me—she took no thought about their business.

By slow degrees I recovered. At the end of three weeks Steinbrenner declared I was safe, but that at one time he expected to see me die at any moment. So it is they deceive their patients for their own good, and I cannot blame them ; three-fourths of them would lose

all courage if they knew the state they were in. So at last I was out of danger, and then only did Steinbrenner allow them to give me a little food. Every morning Nicole arrived from the Three Pigeons, with a little basket on her arm, to inquire for me. Maître Jean used to send her. That year sugar was sold at thirty-two sous one denier the pound, and meat was not to be had for money. Ah, good Maître Jean ! you treated me as your own child ; in every misfortune in life you have held your hand out to me ; you were honesty and goodness itself. How few men there are like you, and what a remembrance they leave in the hearts of those who have known them ! Nicole went into the kitchen every day, and I wanted nothing. When Margaret saw what a good appetite I had, she smiled. Maître Jean and the patriots Eloy Collin, Létumier, and Raphaël Manque used also to come and shake hands with me.

It is generally after severe illnesses that one feels pleasure in living, and one sees the bright side of everything ; everything affected me, and made me cry like a child. The mere light of day through the curtains dazzled me ; and how pretty Margaret seemed to me then, with her black hair, her pale complexion, and her white teeth ! When I think of that, I feel twenty once more.

At the end of a month I had recovered strength. I could easily have gone over to Baraques, but the idea of seeing my mother was not a pleasant one. I knew beforehand what sort of a reception she would give me. The whole town was talking about my marriage with Margaret. My mother had begun to have some terrible quarrels with my father about it. She said—

“ I will have no heretic daughter-in-law ! ”

And my father, very angry, would reply—

“But I will. The law only requires my consent, and I give it, and my blessing with it. Cry, make what disturbance you like, I am the master!”

I only heard of these things afterwards ; my good old father kept them from me at that time.

Now I will tell you about my marriage, which I am sure will give you more pleasure than the siege of Mayence or the rout of Coron, for one would always rather see people happy than wretched.

You must know, then, that at the end of May I was up and about again, clothed from head to foot by Margaret, for I had not a sou—I do not deny it, for I am proud of it ; she would say—“Michel belongs to me, from the tie of his wig to the sole of his shoes.” Well, about that time Margaret and I, both of us, wrote to Chauvel, who was with the Army of the Alps, to say what had occurred, and to ask his consent. He sent it to us immediately, saying his sole regret was that he could not be at Phalsbourg, but that he approved of everything, and desired his friend Jean Leroux to act for him as father at the wedding.

He also sent several invitations to the wedding ; for this most sensible man, even among very great affairs, saw what was going on a long way off, and forgot nothing on such occasions. The day was fixed for the 3rd Messidor in the second year of the Republic, or, if you like it better, June 21, 1794. It was during the great famine, and every one knows that in ordinary times the month of June is a difficult one to get through : the grain harvest takes place in July and August. Imagine the state of the country after '93 ; everything had been consumed long before, and there was nothing to harvest

yet—nothing came to market; the poor people went as they did before the Revolution to gather nettles; they boiled them with salt and ate them.

In spite of the hardness of the times, of the ravaged state of the country by the Germans, and the dearness of food; in spite of the lists of former presidents, former judges, and former farmers-general—the accomplices of Louis Capet, Lafayette, and Dumouriez—who were led daily to the guillotine; in spite of all, the wedding was a gay one. The feast lasted till nine in the evening; they were beating the retreat as the guests left, laughing and singing, and wishing one another good night. No one would have thought the Reign of Terror was at its height. My father, Maître Jean, and Dame Catherine took the road to Baraques, my brother Stephen shut the shop and went upstairs to bed; Margaret and I were left alone as happy as possible.

That is how my marriage took place, and of course it was the happiest day in my life.

Maître Jean had told me there was no want of work at the forge, and that my hammer was there for me whenever I wished; he also gave me to understand he would soon give the forge up to me, and that he would go and look after his farm at Pickholz.

I was thus freed from all uneasiness with regard to the future, knowing my three livres were always ready for me. Things, however, took an unexpected turn. The next morning, as Stephen, Margaret, and I were at breakfast in our little book-shop, with a bit of bacon, a few nuts, and a glass of wine—our three almanacks hanging in the window of the Rue des Capucins, a bundle of newspapers on the right, and a large stone bottle of ink on the left—just as I was going to put

on my blacksmith's jacket, I told them the promise my godfather had made me, thinking to please them both. Margaret, in her little white morning jacket, listened to me very quietly, and then raising her voice a little, she said—

"All that is very well, Michel; let Maître Jean go and look after his farm at Pickeholz, and leave his forge, that is his business; but we must look after our own affairs."

"Well, but, my good Margaret," said I, "what can I do here, with my arms folded? Is it not enough that you have clothed me? do you want to have to keep me too?"

"Not at all," said she; "that is not what I wish. Stephen, I hear the bell; go and see what those people want, while I talk to your brother."

Stephen went out, and then Margaret, sitting by me, before her father's old desk, explained that we should extend our business, and sell groceries—pepper, salt, coffee, &c.; that we could buy them at first hand from the Simonis of Strasbourg, and that would pay us better than books and newspapers, because people first thought of eating before instructing themselves.

"No doubt, no doubt," said I; "it is an excellent idea, only we cannot carry it out without money."

"We have a little," said she; "by dint of economy I have been able to save four hundred and fifty livres; but that is a trifle. The name of Chauvel is known all over Alsace and Lorraine, and respected everywhere; if we want to have goods on credit, we can."

When I heard her talk about credit, my hair stood on end; I could see the old usurer Robin again knock-

ing at the window; my poor father setting out for his day's *corvée*, and my mother crying—"Ah, that goat! that goat! She will make us all die of starvation." I felt cold all down my back, and I could not help saying so to Margaret. She tried to make me understand there was a great difference, for we were going to buy to sell again, and that we should have fifty days, or even three months, in advance. I could not comprehend it, and the word credit alone terrified me. She saw how it was, and at last said, smiling—

"Very well, Michel, you will not take credit, so we will not ask for it; but we can buy goods with the money I have, can we not?"

"Ah, that is quite different; whenever you like, Margaret," said I.

"Well," said she, getting up, "let us set off at once; I have the money there quite ready. Our newspaper business is nearly gone; people are too poor to spend money in news. Let us lose no time."

She was quick enough in making up her mind. I was very well satisfied to take nothing on credit, and therefore accompanied Margaret willingly to Strasbourg. We were obliged to take our places in Baptiste's coach. It left precisely at midday. I had the bag of money buttoned up under my waistcoat. We were in the back seats, squeezed one against the other, in company with some Alsatians, who were going home. The dust was something extraordinary this month of June, and the roads, which were very badly kept, had ruts in them a foot deep, and we could hardly breathe. That is all I recollect about our journey. Margaret and I looked at one another like two happy creatures. We stopped at the hill before Wasselonne; thank Heaven, the

Alsations got out at last, and we finished by arriving at night. Margaret was acquainted with Strasbourg; she took me to the inn of the Cave-Profonde, which was then kept by Grandfather Diemer. We had a room. What a pleasure it was to wash myself with fresh water after such a drive! People now could not form an idea of it; it is impossible; they must have done it to believe it.

About eight a waiting-maid came and asked us if we would sup at the large or small table. I was going to say we would sup at the small table, thinking it was that which would cost the least. Fortunately, Margaret said directly we would sup at the large table; and when the servant was gone she explained that at the large table it only cost twenty-five sous, because every one, waggoners, market-people, and peasants, supped there, and did not care to pay much; while at the small table in another room wealthier people supped, who paid three livres. I shuddered when I thought of the danger we had run of devouring six francs' worth of goods at one supper. I need not describe it to you—I should never have done.

The next day, about seven, Margaret and I, arm in arm, went to see the Simonis, Rue des Minotiers, in the old vegetable-market, where they have since put up a statute to Guttenberg. The Simonis were people known all over Alsace; I had often heard them talked of as the richest merchants in the province. So I fancied them in my own mind to be dressed in accordance with their reputation, in magnificent coats, fine hats, and watch-chains with numerous seals hanging to them. What, then, was my astonishment when, at the corner of the street, I saw a little man, about five-and-thirty or forty, in a jacket, his hair tied up by a plain ribbon,

who was rolling barrels about and setting boxes against the walls in his shop till they were put away in the warehouse, and Margaret said to me—

“Here is M. Simonis.”

This changed my ideas on the subject of rich merchants. I then acknowledged that the coat did not make the man; and since then I have made no mistake in that matter.

As we passed along, all these boxes, and barrels, and sacks piled up right and left, and carts discharging their loads, M. Simonis saw in a moment that we were buyers. So he left his assistants at work, and took us into his large shop, which opened into two streets, with a back shop behind, the office at the side, like ours at Phalsbourg, only four times as large.

What a sight for small traders just beginning business were these heaps of sacks piled up, these boxes in rows from the floor to the ceiling, hundreds of loaves of sugar, baskets of raisins and figs open as samples, and the smell of thousands of expensive things that were there in such abundance! What an idea it gives you of every country in the world which sends such riches of every sort over in ships!—an idea which does not occur to you at first. One only thinks of getting a small share in the profits arising from these things, and in course of time, when one sits quietly by a good store reading one's newspaper, after having succeeded in business, then only does the reflection occur to you that hundreds and thousands of blacks and whites, of all colours and all nations, have worked hard to make you rich.

I do not mean to tell you that such thoughts came into my head while I was in that great warehouse. No.

But I saw it was a very great business, which rather frightened me.

But Margaret, on the contrary, was very plain. She put her basket down on the counter, and told M. Simonis in a few words that we intended to buy some goods and start in business as grocers in Phalsbourg; saying we had not much money to spend, but every intention of earning some. He listened to us with a good-natured air, with his hands crossed behind his back; and was as red in the face as a conscript is before his commander-in-chief.

"So you are the daughter of Chauvel, the representative Chauvel?" said Simonis.

"Yes, citizen, and here is my husband. Our house will be called Bastien-Chauvel."

He laughed, and called to his wife, a neat little woman, as quick and active as mine.

"Here, Sophie, attend to these young people; they want to go into business; see what you can do for them. I must get our goods in out of the street, for the public way is obstructed, and I have already had notice to make haste."

A number of men and boys were going and coming, with their shirt-sleeves turned up—a perfect swarm of working people.

The young wife came up; her husband said a few words in her ear; then she nodded to us both, and said to Margaret—

"Be so good as to come this way."

And we walked into a small office, very plain, and rather dark, to the right of the warehouse. She asked us to sit down, and smiled at Margaret, who spoke. She looked at a long list of things which Margaret

had drawn up, and marked the price against every article.

"Is that all you want?" said she.

"Yes," said Margaret, "we have no more money."

"But," said the young lady, "you must have a greater choice than that. You will have competitors, and——"

"My husband will only deal for ready money."

Then the lady looked at me for a couple of seconds; she saw directly I had been a peasant workman or soldier, and that I knew nothing about business, for she laughed, and said good-humouredly—

"They are all like that; and then they get too bold, and we are obliged to hold them in. Well, we shall arrange matters, no doubt."

She left the bureau, and gave some directions, asking whether we would have the goods sent by the waggon or the diligence. Margaret replied by the waggon, and what pleased me most was that she told me to pay for our orders at once. I immediately emptied the bag of money on the counter, but the lady would not take our money. Margaret assured her if she did not I should not sleep all night, so she counted up our four piles of a hundred livres each in a moment, and gave us the receipt thus: "Value payable in goods;" and then this good little woman, whom I have known intimately since, and who has even more than once laid her hand on my arm, and said, with a laugh, "Ah, my dear M. Bastien, how frightened you were when you began, and now you are bold enough, perhaps too much so!"—this good lady went with us to the door, and wished us gaily good-bye, promising that everything should be at Phalsbourg before the end of the week. Then she

cast an eye over the chests and boxes which they were storing away, and exchanged a word or two with her husband, and we took our departure for the Cave-Profonde.

About ten the same evening we arrived home again. I had grown more confident, and I saw we should be able to make a profit by our business. The two next days Margaret showed me how to keep books by single entry, the rough draft to put down what had been sold on credit during the day, the ledger where each person's debt is put down, and then the invoice book for what has been delivered, and what is expected, what has to be paid when bills become due, with invoices and bills already paid.

But now while I am about it I must tell you of my surprise and uneasiness when the barrel arrived, a very small one, and I said to myself—

“What! only that for four hundred and fifty livres! Good Heavens! Why it seems nothing at all! We have been robbed!”

And as the barrel was emptied on the counter, when I saw how little coffee and pepper there was, I said—

“We shall never see our money back—it is impossible.”

The worst of all was the invoice at the bottom, an invoice nearly twice the amount I expected, for there were many things, such as ginger and nutmegs, which we had never ordered, and we remained more than three hundred livres in debt to Simonis.

Then I was in a rage. I should have sent everything back again if Margaret had not repeated, time after time, that we should sell these things at a good profit,

and that the Simonis did not want to ruin, but to do us a service.

We had also two pairs of scales to buy, and to put up three rows of drawers for our groceries, so that at last we were in debt to the carpenter, the locksmith, and every one. If all my hair did not come off during these first weeks, it must have been very strong indeed; and had it not been for my extraordinary confidence in Margaret, and my love for her, and Maître Jean's assurance, which he came and gave us himself, that he would assist us if we became embarrassed—had it not been for all that, I should have run out of the house, for money-lenders, bankruptcy, and disgrace were continually before my eyes. I could not sleep for thinking of it. I afterwards heard my poor father had his share of troubles, for my mother, noticing how uneasy he was, had guessed the truth, and said to him every morning and evening—

“Well, so they are not bankrupt yet! If it's not to-day it will be to-morrow. The wretch will be a disgrace to our old age! I was sure of it! It could only turn out so!” and so on continuously.

The poor man was driven crazy. He said nothing to me about it, but his hollow cheeks and his restless eyes told me what he had to endure.

At last, at the end of a couple of months, when I saw all the town and the neighbourhood, citizens, peasants, and soldiers, who had been in the habit of coming to us to buy their newspapers, ink, pens, and paper, and at the same time buy their tobacco, salt, soap—all they wanted, in fact; and the housekeepers also began to find their way to our shop, and that sou by sou, liard by liard, we were getting our money back—when we

had paid the balance due on Simonis' invoice, and at the end of that time Margaret showed me clearly that we had gained eight or ten livres every day, then I breathed again, and gave her leave to send to Strasbourg again for goods such as we had already sold, and of which we were in want, but also others for which we were asked, but which we had not hitherto dealt in.

Our little business of journals, with paper, Republican catechisms, pens, and other things, still went on; we were all busy in the shop, but that did not hinder our talking about the affairs of the nation in the evening after supper, while we were putting our sous into rouleaus, and making up our parcels.

Sometimes Stephen, sometimes Margaret, or I, took the *Décade* or the *Tribune du Peuple*, or the *Feuille de la République*, and read it aloud, that we might know what was going on.





CHAPTER III.



REMEMBER it was at that time a question of nothing but the campaign in the North, and the battles of Courtrai, Pont-à-chin, and Fleurus. Jourdan and Pichegru were our chief leaders abroad on the frontiers. At home Robespierre grew more powerful every day. He had passed a decree recognising the existence of the Supreme Being and the belief of the people in the immortality of the soul. It was reported that order would soon be established everywhere, the wholesale slaughter by the guillotine was to cease after the punishment of the chief criminals, and that we should then have the reign of virtue at last.

It was every one's anxiety now to resemble the ancient Romans as much as possible; they said the Jacobins had made the nearest approach to them, but even they had not reached the height of the pattern they had proposed to themselves. Many citizens who formerly called themselves Joseph, Jean, Claude, or Nicolas, had changed their names; the new calendar knew only Brutus, Cincinnatus, and Gracchus; and

those who had not the advantage of some little education had no idea what they meant. At the patriotic fêtes the goddesses were nearly naked; such things were really disgusting and disgraceful.

How contrary it was to common sense to wish to resemble people of whom three-fourths of the nation were profoundly ignorant, and to remodel ourselves on the pattern of these ancient pagans, who were half savages after all! But one took care not to cry out against this nonsense, for denunciations were rife, and one might be arrested, judged, and guillotined within the twenty-four hours.

Every time that Robespierre spoke in the Convention it was voted that what he said should be printed; all the clubs, all the municipal authorities in every town, received copies of his speeches, which were posted up everywhere, just as they do the mandate of a bishop now—one would think they were words from the mouth of the Almighty.

And all at once, during June and July, this man was silent; he attended neither the Committee of Public Safety nor the Committee of Surveillance. I believe in my conscience he fancied they could not do without him, that we should be obliged to beg him on our knees to return, and that then he could dictate his own terms to the country. I have always had that idea, the more so that his friend Saint-Just, who had returned from a mission to the army, seeing that everything was quiet, and that all was going on well without them, declared a dictator was wanted, and that this dictator could be none other than the virtuous Robespierre. He made this declaration to the Committee of Public Safety; but the members of the Committee saw

what these virtuous beings were aiming at: they refused to listen to him! And the "incorruptible man," indignant that they should allow themselves to oppose him, made up his mind to get rid of them. All I have since read confirms me in what I tell you. Robespierre was an informer; by his denunciations he had terrified every one; he wanted to denounce the members of the Committee themselves, and send them to share the fate of Danton.

About the end of July the chiefs of our club, who received their orders from the Jacobins, with Elof Collin at their head, went to Paris for the fête of the Thermidor, and our people were afraid, for they expected some great blow would be struck. They were all partisans of Robespierre, Elof especially so; after they left one hardly dared speak.

This lasted eight or ten days; and then one fine morning couriers brought us the news that Robespierre, Couthon, Saint-Just, and all their friends had been caught in the same haul of the net one day, and guillotined the next. It was something frightful in the town: the wives and children of our patriots thought their fathers, brothers, and husbands were of the number. Only fancy the situation of these people, who neither dared to cry out or even to grieve for them; for Saint-Just himself had caused a decree to be passed declaring that those who pitied the guilty were "suspected," and if they harboured them, even were it their own mother, they deserved death; fancy such a trial to the feelings as that.

We were all trembling together, when, the 1st of August, as I was alone with Margaret in our little room looking over the market-place, as we were going

to bed we heard two knocks at the shutter. I thought some one had forgotten a candle or some oil, so I opened the door : Elof Collin was there !

As soon as I could I went out and opened the door in the passage, rather uneasy, you may be sure ; it was at that time no trifling matter to receive Robespierrists who were getting away from Paris, but I would have risked my head for the sake of Chauvel's old friend.

Collin came in : I bolted the door in the passage and followed him in. When in the room, with a candle on the table, Elof looked round in every corner for a moment and listened. I can see him now, with his great cocked hat, his bluish-grey coat, his large wig tied behind his back, his cheeks hollow, and his large hooked nose quite white.

"You are all alone?" said he as he sat down.

I sat down opposite him without replying. Margaret remained standing.

"All is lost," said he, after a minute's pause ; "jobbers, thieves, and rogues have the upper hand, and the Republic is down. It is by great good luck that we escaped."

He threw his hat on the table, and looked hard at us, to see what we thought.

"How unfortunate!" said Margaret ; "since you went we have all been in a state of distrust."

And then he lowered his voice, and in the stillness of the night he told us how the principal provincial Jacobins, the chiefs of the clubs, had received notice to be in Paris for the fête of the Thermidor, for a general purification was in preparation. But when they arrived there, with the exception of the Jacobins who remained true to their principles, they found everything cankered,

Convention and Committees; then Robespierre had risked his report against the Committees, and the Convention, very unwillingly, by habit and through fear, had voted the report should be printed; but the jobbers, who felt they were threatened by it, had revoked the vote, and ordered the report to be sent back to be examined by the Committees themselves; a most abominable proceeding, for it was the Committees of Public Safety and of General Security which Robespierre had just denounced, and which he sought to purify; these men could not be judges in their own cause! Then the same evening Robespierre read his report at the Jacobin Club, where all the patriots declared in his favour; it was then proposed to raise the sections against the Convention; and Payan, Fleuriot-Lescot, the Mayor of Paris, Henriot, the commandant of the National Guard—in fact, all good sans-culottes—only asked to lay hands on the Committees and upset at once the “corrupt” faction.

But the too “virtuous” Robespierre was opposed to a rising against the Convention, which had it in its power to outlaw them: his aim was to overthrow the Montagne and the Committees by calling the right and centre of the Assembly to his assistance, the “virtuous” men of the centre, who used to be called the frogs of the Marais; but these creatures without principles, not knowing who among them might be in the list of proscription, and who felt they were all more or less tainted, allowed themselves to be won over to the side of the jobbers the same night, so that the next day, Sunday, the 9th Thermidor, Saint-Just having attempted to speak at the opening of the Convention, Tallien, the greatest villain of the old Montagne, cut

this virtuous man short; others then interfered, and Robespierre himself was unable to utter a word, for all the members of the Assembly, on the right and the left, above and below, all at once, and then one after the other, obliged him to be silent, calling him Cromwell, tyrant, despot, triumvir, and at last ordered him, Robespierre, his brother Auguste-Bon-Joseph, Couthon, Saint-Just, and Lebas, to be accused at once, and had them arrested and sent to the city prisons.

This was Collin's story; we listened to it with amazement, as you may suppose.

He continued telling us that the people were waiting in suspense during this sitting; towards evening, having heard what had passed, they rose to set these grand patriots free; the brave Commune had rung the tocsin, and sent the officers of the municipality to rescue the prisoners, and conduct them to the Hôtel de Ville; but Henriot, who was rather intoxicated, as he often was, had allowed himself to be arrested as he was galloping through the streets to raise the people, and the "corrupt" party had led him prisoner to the Committee of General Security.

These events happened between five and six in the evening. At seven the Convention was to meet again: this was known; Coffinhal hurried to the Tuileries to take Henriot out of prison with a hundred patriot artillerymen, who immediately levelled their cannon at the door of the Convention, to prevent the representatives from going in. "Unfortunately," said Collin, "instead of remaining quietly there, Henriot was foolish enough to go to the Hôtel de Ville for orders; in the meantime the representatives arrived, the artillerymen dispersed themselves, and the Convention, notwith-

standing the tocsin, the shouts of the people outside, and the danger of insurrection, outlawed Henriot, the two Robespierres, Couthon, Saint-Just, Lebas, and all the conspirators of the Commune, and the principal Jacobins. It sent commissaries to read this decree in all the sections, and named Barras commander-in-chief of the forces against the rebels.

"The blame of all this," said Collin indignantly, "falls on Henriot; the wretch had been drunk since morning; he shouted and brandished his sword, but he gave no orders."

I thought directly of Santerre, Léchelle, and Rossignol; these brawlers were all alike; and those who followed them were led either to defeat or the guillotine.

And then Eloy in despair went on to tell us how the sans-culottes in a body were afraid of being included in the decree of outlawry, and that instead of going to the support of Robespierre and his upright followers at the Hôtel de Ville, the greater number hurried to join Barras at the Tuileries, shouting out, "Vive la Convention!" And between one and two in the morning the whole National Guard marched down along both sides of the Seine, notwithstanding the musketry of a handful of patriots, who tried to offer some resistance along the river, took possession of the hall of the Commune, where the true representatives of the people were; threw Henriot out of window; Robespierre received a pistol-shot in the face; Couthon was dragged into a drain; Lebas destroyed himself; and the younger Robespierre, Saint-Just, and all the supporters of the Republic had been taken to prison amidst kicks, blows from muskets, insulted and spat upon, and Robespierre had been carried on a plank to the Convention, where

they would not even see him, as they said the sight of him would have been an offence to the jobbers ; and at last these martyrs, with a number of other Jacobins, municipal officers, &c., all outlawed, had been dragged to the guillotine on the Place de la Révolution amidst cries, showers of mud, and all sorts of insults, so maltreated that they could not remain standing, and poor Couthon, who was rolling about under the others' feet, nearly dead, asked them as a favour to despatch him at once ; in front of the scaffold Maximilian Robespierre had been reserved to the last, that he might see the execution of his friends ; the executioner, a Royalist, had torn the bandage off his face, and had shown him thus alive with his disfigured countenance to the furious mob, and then he put him to death as he had done the others.

This is what Eloy Collin told us with a shudder ; I thought of Danton, Camille Desmoulins, and Westermann ; I saw the informers had done by these last as by the first. I listened to this account with disgust. Collin, who was very pale, having become silent, I said to him—

“ Listen, Citizen Eloy ; what you have just been telling us in no degree astonishes me ; what does surprise me is that such a state of things should have lasted so long. When we had all Europe and La Vendée on our hands, it was necessary to suspend the application of the constitution of '93, and establish the Committee of Public Safety, the Committee of General Security, and the Revolutionary Tribunal ; terror was needed against the aristocrats, the self-seekers, the conspirators, and the traitors who were surrendering our fortresses and showing the way into their country

to the foreigners; but now for several months the guillotine has been in action against the best patriots! Is it not a real abomination that men like Danton, Desmoulins, Hérault-Séchelles, Lacroix, Bazire, Philippeaux, Westermann, &c., who had been seen at the head of all the great days of the Revolution, should have been guillotined without trial by creatures who trembled in their shoes and hid themselves the days of fighting? by men who remained on the watch in their police-offices, like spiders in their webs? Is it not a disgrace to France and to the Republic? How could it benefit us to guillotine Danton? How despots must have laughed that day! Could our greatest enemies have done us as much harm? Did not all citizens of good sense and good feeling shudder with indignation?"

Collin looked at me, bit his lips, and struck the table with his fists.

"Then you do not believe in the virtue of Robespierre?" he asked.

"In the virtue of Robespierre and Saint-Just!" said I, shrugging my shoulders; "how can any one believe in the virtue of the scoundrels who assassinated Danton because he was greater, more powerful, and more generous than they were altogether; because he desired that liberty and compassion should be substituted for the guillotine, and because, as long as he lived, dictators were an impossibility? What constituted their wonderful virtue? What have they done to elevate them so much above the rest of the world? What greater dangers have they incurred than have done seven or eight hundred thousand citizens, who marched in sabots to the frontier? Have they ever wanted bread, fire, or

shoes in winter as we did in La Vendée? No. They have made long speeches, pronounced well-turned sentences, given orders, proscribed those who were obstacles to their ambition, and lastly attempted to get themselves named dictators. Well, I am against a dictatorship, and I prefer liberty to the guillotine. It is too easy to send those thither who do not think as you do; any villain could do the same. I have fought for liberty; for the right of saying and writing as I think; to hold property of my own—fields, meadows, houses, without tithes, field-rent, or privileges, when I have earned them by my honest labour; to be able to spend my money or hoard it as I think proper, without these incorruptible, these upright men, as daintily dressed as women, being able to interfere in my concerns, or say to me, ‘Your clothes are too fine, your dinners are too good, you are not like the ancient Romans, you must lose your head.’ What atrocious despots! They were the incarnation of selfishness and pride. People who had passed their lives at the desk, and who believed they could change the nature of men by decrees of accusation and fine speeches, with a guillotine always at work to enforce obedience—ah! when I think of it, it makes me sick.”

I was very indignant. Collin, unable to reply, suddenly got up, took his hat, and hurried away. Margaret followed him, bolted the door, and came back. I thought she was going to reproach me, but on the contrary she said to me—

“You are right, Michel; they were all bad, vain men. I saw Saint-Just when he was here; he would hardly answer any one who spoke to him, he had such a great idea of his own greatness. Poor Danton and

Camille Desmoulins were very different. No one would have supposed those patriots were the leading men in the Republic; goodness and courage were reflected in their countenances. The others were cold and stiff, and looked down upon you from the pinnacle of their grandeur; they surely thought themselves of a different blood to us. But, nevertheless, the Republic had just had a terrible blow; the rogues who are now our masters will sell us."

"Nonsense, Margaret," said I; "do not fancy that five or six men are all France—the nation is everything. The people who works, fights, defends itself, and raises its money for itself and not for others, what it has gained it will never give up again, if all the despots and slaves in the world united against it; of that you may be sure. We must all be cut to pieces before we surrender even a blade of grass. The rest will come of itself. Our children will be taught; they will know what every inch of ground has cost us. I do not think they will be more stupid or more cowardly than we are; nor that they will allow themselves to be plundered."

That is how the day passed. The next, what Eloy Collin had told us was spread about the town. All faces were changed. Some seemed to rise from the ground, others to sink into it. But you must not think that terror was at an end. No doubt quantities of prisoners came back from Nancy, Metz, and the pontoons at Strasbourg, people half dead with fright, who had been in daily expectation of being called before the revolutionary tribunal, and then have to mount the fatal cart. I knew about fifty of them from hence, and they always said the 9th Thermidor had saved their lives. But these people, instead of being contented,

wanted to revenge themselves, and send others to the guillotine; and it was about that time that the great hatred to the Jacobins began.

They called not only Robespierre's partisans Jacobins, but also the Dantonists, the Hebertists, and all Republicans together.

The true patriots knew where that came from. They drew together. That is why, even to-day, all men are not sorry to hear themselves called Jacobins, though Robespierre is no longer their patron saint. Had they the good fortune to have a Danton, a Camille Desmoulins, or a Westermann among them, they would not think of guillotining them.

Thus the death of Robespierre brought all the patriots together; and Tallien, Fouché, Barras, Fréron, and those who were called Thermidorians, because they had overthrown Robespierre in Thermidor, having shown that they had not struck the blow for the sake of the Republic, but for their own private interest, fell into contempt. Their proper name was "the party of the jobbers," as you will see further on; for in telling you my history I shall always be careful to tell you everything that concerns the country. One does not live for oneself alone, one lives for all honest people, and those who take an interest only in their own affairs do not deserve to belong to a civilised nation.





CHAPTER IV.



WING to the economy, good sense, and order with which Margaret had begun our business, things went on prosperously, therefore I will spare you the details of our weekly profits, and how we lived.

When a man remains at home and does not go to the pothouse to spend his earnings, when he is pleased with his wife's society, and looks after his business, then one day is like another—they are all happy ones, especially during youth.

For all that we had a miserable year to pass; I never remember such confusion in the country, nor greater uneasiness and deeper distress, than after the death of Robespierre. The newspapers were full of fêtes, dances, new fashions, and rejoicings; they talked of nothing but the Cabarrus, the widow Beauharnais, and of five or six other women, who were, as they said, about to give entertainments, and resuscitate the elegance of former manners. During this time the people, in consequence of the forestalling of grain, the

abolition of fixed prices, the fall in the value of assignats, the prosperity of rogues, the return of the Girondins, the federalists, and the émigrés to power ; by the condemnation of patriots rendered responsible for the execution of the orders of the Committee of Public Safety ; by the invasion of capuchins and monks who wanted their chapels, and of curés calling for their churches ; the closing of all the clubs, as the Jacobins' of Paris had been—in fact, by the triumph of a bad set of men—who began crying, and clamouring, and threatening—and from a thousand other causes, the people were so miserable that men died of hunger like the beasts of the field, and added to this winter came. I have never been able to understand why the winter's famine was so great, for as I passed through France ten months previously I noticed everything promised well ; the harvests, the crops of all sorts had not failed ; perhaps they had been consumed as they came on, as is the case when there has been great distress, and men can wait no longer—that is possible ! Others say that the disorganised state of the laws and the abolition of fixed prices were the principal cause ; that it had been settled beforehand between the Royalists and the Thermidorians, in order to raise the people against the Republic, and oblige it to ask for kings, and princes, and dukes, who, with the assistance of the bishops and the grace of God, can make both rain and sunshine.

All I have to say is, that the Thermidorians, by recalling the Girondins, at the proposition of Sieyès, by associating themselves with the Royalists, by the life they led with women, and in praising themselves for it in their newspapers, had finished by discouraging us, and that during this time of fearful distress we

heard a part of the people of Paris had asked the Convention to bring kings back again, declaring they regretted having supported the cause of the Revolution. Thus by trickery and debauchery, the invention of immodest fashions, and other filthy things which idiots imitate, the rogues had at length succeeded in making their vices pass for virtues, in discouraging respectable people, and at last getting their hand into the people's purse, which was what they wanted most of all, for then they were on the highest pinnacle, and paid for their extravagances with our money.

Quantities of rascals made their fortune in '94; they bought twenty-franc assignats for ten sous, and paid for national property with them, and their old debts as well. All would have been lost if the army had followed this abominable example, but then we could see Republican virtue still existed in our army. The Thermidorians and their friends had hastened to replace the Montagnards in the Committee of Public Safety; but a Carnot, a Prieur de la Côte-d'Or, or a Robert Lindet—great men to work, capable of organising, supporting, and leading armies, patriots who thought but of their duty day and night—are not easy to replace by brawlers and intriguers; they were obliged to let them remain where they were for some time longer, and those men were well known in our armies: they held the same opinions.

Therefore, while under the direction of Tallien, Fréron, and Barras all went from bad to worse at home, while the dandies were allowed to assassinate patriots with their loaded sticks, while they gave balls “à la victime,” while they dressed themselves “à la justice,” “à l'humanité,” and bowed “à la victime,” and gave them-

selves up to debauchery, our armies continued to gain most important victories.

During the frightful winter of 1794-1795, the Army of the Sambre and the Meuse, commanded by Jourdan, and that of the North by Pichegru, drove the Germans and English out of our country ; they invaded Holland, and made themselves masters of the whole of the left bank of the Rhine, from Bâle in Switzerland to the sea. It was one of the most splendid of all our Republican campaigns. It froze hard enough to split a stone ; our hussars galloped across the ice, and even took the enemy's fleet, a thing never seen before, and which will never be seen again.

How many times on Tuesdays and Fridays, market days, when a crowd of poor people filled our little shop on the Place des Halles, wanting salt and tobacco, while the wind drove the snow even behind the counter, and the ice covered the steps level with the floor, how many times have I said to myself, while I looked out at the white street in front, and at the trees blown about on the ramparts—

“It is not warm, but all the same, my brave comrades with their naked feet and legs tied round with straw, on the high roads, are not as well off as we are.”

While serving in the shop, and attending to customers, the same ideas occurred to me. I thought of Mayence, Mans, and Savenay, and yet that was nothing in comparison with this winter of 1794, when wine and even brandy froze in the cellars.

And in the evening when the shutters were closed, when the fire murmured in our little stove, while Margaret counted the sous, and I put them up in rouleaus, and my brother Stephen read about our entry

into Utrecht, Arnheim, Amersdorf, and Amsterdam, the passage of the dykes and the canals, how our hussars summoned the Texel fleet to surrender, and other equally wonderful circumstances, how many times did my eyes become dim, and Margaret would suddenly stop, and say—

“Ah, while the Royalists are trying to abolish the rights of man and of the citizen, the Republic is gaining victories, and the despots are running away.”

And then we would all cry out—

“The Republic for ever, one and indivisible!”

All the chief Jacobins of the town, even Elof Collin, who had made it up with me, as he knew I had spoken as I felt, they all had the habit of coming and conversing by our stove after supper. Our book-shop became the place of meeting for the patriots; it was there we first heard any great news, and we celebrated the nation's victories by singing the *Marseillaise*. We could not help it—it was in the blood of the family; even five-and-twenty years afterwards they only heard that song at Bastien-Chauvel's, and when they left off singing it in that house, the whole town knew that the Royalists had the upper hand.

By the end of that winter we already kept every description of groceries, and in Phalsbourg and its neighbourhood people owed us more than nine hundred livres; when people are so distressed, and one knows them to be honest, hard-working, and saving, it is not possible to refuse them credit for the first necessities of life. No, it is not. We owed Simonis about as much as we were owed; but he wrote to us himself to tell us not to trouble ourselves about paying him, that he would wait three months longer if we wished; that it

was a difficult time for every one ; and at the same time he offered to supply us with fresh goods.

The 1st of March, 1795, we balanced our accounts for the first time, which is indispensable for every man in business who wishes to know the state of his affairs, what he has sold, what he has in stock, if he has lost or gained, if he can extend his business or restrict it ; only rogues like to live in confusion, till the sheriff's officer comes to make their inventory for them.

We were glad to find that when Simonis and our booksellers were paid, we should have a clear profit of fifteen hundred livres. After such hard times it was something splendid.

Of course my father and Maître Jean used to come and see us at least once a week, and my father dined with us every Sunday. Margaret never forgot during the famine to slip a large piece of bread and meat into his pocket when he left ; she would rather have sent us to bed supperless than not have done so, and I loved her all the more for it. We knew the hour this excellent father would come ; it was always in the morning ; from our door we could see him smiling at the end of the street. He would draw himself up, and greet the people he met quite gaily ; even the children, who used to call out—

“ Good day, Father Bastien.”

He would laugh and open the door, and say—

“ Well, Michel, well, my children, how are you ? getting on well ? ”

“ Yes, father.”

Then he would shake the snow from his feet, and come into the book-shop, warm his hands at the stove, and look kindly at Margaret. We were then expecting

the greatest happiness a man can have in this world, and my good father knew it. I do not think there was a happier man to be found than he was at that time; he would try to sing, but his joy prevented him. He always ended by wiping his eyes, and saying—

“My God! how lucky I have been all my life! I am the luckiest of men!”

And the usurer Robin, the forced labour, fifty years of want, Nicolas, my mother, my departure in '92, were all forgotten; he could only see us; Stephen nearly grown up, me back again in safety, Margaret become my wife; as to the rest, he thought about it no more.

We had sometimes letters from Chauvel; they were Margaret's days of delight, but these letters were brief. He did not write at length as he used to do formerly. A few words, “My children, I embrace you. The news you send me gives me great pleasure; I hope we shall soon meet. Time presses, and things look serious. Remember me to Maître Jean, Collin,” &c. One could see he was mistrustful; he dared not write much. However, we knew he was well, and that was something; and as Chauvel was to return to Paris after his mission to the army of the Alps, we hoped to see him as he passed.

Our first child was born the last day of March, 1795. It was a fine stout boy, with round arms and legs, and very strong. After great uneasiness and suffering, when I saw him in his mother's arms, under the white counterpane, I felt something strong and almost terrible stir my heart; it seemed as if the Supreme Being was around us, and said—

“I give thee this child to be made a citizen and a defender of justice and liberty.”

My feelings choked me ; I swore to myself to do my uttermost to make a man of him.

Margaret looked at him and smiled ; she said nothing. Old Horson and the other women all exclaimed—

“What a fine boy ! how big he is !”

Two citizens who were in the shop, having heard the news, asked to come in, when my old father and Maître Jean arrived.

“I congratulate you, Michel, I congratulate you,” said Maître Jean.

My father, after looking at the boy, sobbed for a moment, then he laughed, and pressed me in his arms. He kissed Margaret, and said—

“Now we shall all be happy together, and when he grows bigger I can take him for a walk in the woods.”

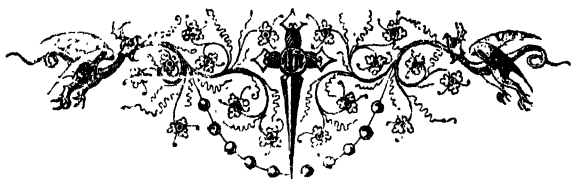
A first child embellishes everything.

Margaret could not speak, she was so happy. She looked at me, and we smiled at one another ; the first words she spoke were—

“He is like you, Michel ! How pleased my father will be !”

I could tell you many things about that day ; but how can I make them intelligible to those who have had no children by a good wife ? and what can I say that those who have do not know already ?





CHAPTER V.



ALL our great wars were then concluded ; we had conquered Holland and Belgium, the left bank of the Rhine ; part of Piedmont and Spain, and the others asked only for peace. Charette in his marshes could hold out no longer ; the Republic had pardoned the rebels and given them leave to rebuild their houses, restore their churches, and cultivate their land like honest people ; they had even promised them an indemnity on the sole condition that they should remain quiet. Carrier, Penard, and Grandmaison had been guillotined for having exceeded the orders of the Committee of Public Safety. What more could the Vendéans want ? One would think they would have recovered their senses, and that we should have peace for a long time. But then the scoundrels who three years before wanted to share France among themselves, ashamed of having failed in their object, fell upon Poland ; the newspapers could only talk now about the famous Catherine of Russia, the most profligate woman in all Europe, about

her General Souwaroff, and the Polish hero Kosciusko. Kosciusko gained some victories; but then we had the news of the frightful massacre at Praga, then of the defeat of the defenders of liberty; and at last the declaration of the allies "that the Poles being incapable of agreeing to establish a settled form of government, they were about to divide their country among themselves, for the love of justice and the public good." All thieves when arrested and sent to the galleys for breaking locks and robbing houses might say the same; but these were the King of Prussia, the Emperor of Austria, and the Empress of Russia; the bishops in their own country sang *Te Deum* in their honour.

With a small amount of common sense, one might have comprehended that these tyrants would allow no people to be free, and that they had destroyed our only ally to be able to attack us again soon; the old Montagne knew this well; there could be no truce between the Republic and kings; all Europe must be free or become slaves again! But how did that concern the Royalists or the Girondins, who had been allowed to return to the Convention, and who called themselves the seventy-three? On the contrary, these emperors and kings were their best friends; they reckoned upon them and conspired with them; it was for that they kept up the famine; they wanted to raise the people, and then say—

"Ah, if we had but a king everything would go on better; our ports would be open, corn would arrive; we could make advantageous treaties with the Germans, the English, and the Russians; Commerce would raise her head again, manufactures would flourish, &c."

They had in their favour the Thermidorian sections

round the Tuileries, large and small traders, and the artisans of the rich quarter of Paris. The last of the Montagnards on their benches were crushed by numbers; they could no longer speak or remonstrate in the people's favour. Carnot himself had been replaced in the Committee of Public Safety by a Girondin named Aubry, who cashiered all the patriot generals and all officers who were loved by the soldiers. This man followed the plan of the ministers of Louis XVI., who appointed traitors to the command of our fortresses; every one saw it; but what was to be done? The reaction had the armed force under its control; a blank terror began in the South; the Montagnards were terribly in the way of these traitors, so they determined to get rid of them.

The day after our little Jean-Pierre was born, the 12th Germinal, Year III., the Paris papers informed us that the starving people had gone to the Tuileries, that they had invaded the Convention asking for bread, and that the Thermidorian sections had swept them from the hall.

Now the populace was fighting against the burgesses, everything looked bad.

The same courier brought us the news that the Convention had sent Collot-d'Herbois, Billaut-Varennes, and Barrère to Cayenne without trial, and that the citizens Cambon, Maignet, Moïse Bayle, and all the men who in times past had saved France when the Royalists wanted to give her up to her enemies, were in prison. It was always the same plan, to sell their country for places, pensions, and privileges.

That day, notwithstanding the happiness of being in the midst of my family and friends, and of seeing my

wife, my son, and my old father around me, I was ready to take my musket and begin a campaign against the traitors again. Many others had courage enough to do the same; but to what purpose? There were no leaders—they had been guillotined.

Some days later these Thermidorians, these Girondins and Royalists, sent the terrible Fouquier-Tinville, once public accuser, and fifteen judges of the revolutionary tribunal, to the scaffold. The spies and informers ran after the cart in which Fouquier-Tinville was, and called after him—

“You have no right to speak now.”

And he replied—

“And you, you fools, have no bread!”

He was right. The reaction allowed no supplies to enter Paris; the people only received two ounces of bread per man a day! We had already got our early harvest in; the peasants had already sold their reserve of grain and forage, as they saw the chief harvests would be plentiful; there was no longer any famine! but the Royalists needed an insurrection to have the opportunity of crushing the people; they felt themselves now supported, and wanted to become masters again; so it was necessary to starve the poor.

Consequently, the great insurrection of May the 20th, '95—1st Prairial, Year III.—was not long delayed, a famine insurrection in which women, children, and some battalions of the Faubourg St. Antoine rushed into the hall of the Convention, shouting—

“Bread, and the constitution of '93!”

Count Boissy-d'Anglas remained six hours in his place as president, with his hat on his head, in the midst of axes, pikes, and bayonets, levelled against him.

The Count d'Artois would not have liked to have been in his place, I am sure. That Count Boissy-d'Anglas was a Royalist; he was a brave man; he had even the courage to salute the head of the representative Féraud, which was thrust before him at the end of a pike to frighten him.

These things have been related over and over again.

The insurrection of the 1st Prairial lasted three days. The Convention voted several decrees according to the will of the people while they were in possession of the hall, and burned them all the next day. The people were without chiefs—they did not know how to turn their victory to account; if Danton had been there he would have spoken for it. The second day twenty thousand men belonging to the Thermidorian sections and Royalists, reinforced by six thousand dragoons, drove the insurrection back to its miserable quarters of the town whence it had been just forced by famine; and the people, after losing so many thousand men at the frontier, gave way; it dared not accept the offer of battle, and confessed itself beaten in Paris.

That was the last insurrection of importance. Had it not been for our armies, who stood by the Republic, and had it in their power to march upon Paris and re-establish it, that day the Thermidorians, the Girondins, and the Royalists would have had their Louis XVIII. All the members of the old Committees of Public Safety and General Security, with the exception of Carnot and Louis du Bas-Rhin, one-and-twenty other representatives of the people, and ten thousand known patriots were arrested, transported, or guillotined during this week. How fortunate that Chauvel was still on his mission! Cunning does more for traitors than force; by

force they had gained nothing, but now they had it all in their own hands. They cashiered the patriot gendarmerie; they took their cannon from the National Guard, and deprived the working-men of their arms, not one of whom belonged to the citizen guard. They established a garrison of troops of the line in Paris as it was before '89—in fact, all they wanted was the king. But the armies of the Republic were at hand under arms; now it became their object to gain over generals capable of selling the nation, and then to write to his Majesty—

“Come, sire, there is no danger now. Come among your children who weep for their princes, their lords, and their bishops. Just say you have been travelling, and that you are returning home to your family, or any similar absurdity. Come, and all will be well; do not be afraid, son of St. Louis: the throne of your fathers is ready for you.”

Yes, these honest Girondins, who have been represented as victims everywhere, had prepared all this from the very beginning. They thought themselves so sure of success that they hurried matters too much; all the Jacobins were not dead, nor the Cordeliers either; and besides, the peasants intended to keep the national estates they had purchased, the lands which had belonged to the Church, and many other things, as you will see farther on.

But this did not prevent the utter rout of the patriots all over France. At Phalsbourg, Eloy Collin, Manque, Henri Burck, Laffrenez, Loustau, Thévenot, and all public officers who were members of the Egalité Club, were set aside, very fortunate to escape so cheaply. Dr. Steinbrenner was then our mayor, who only at-

tended to his practice, and left the business of the district in the hands of the mayor's secretary, Frœlig; he hardly spent half-an-hour a day at the Hôtel de Ville, and I do not believe he ever read a newspaper; the other municipal officers, Mathias Ehlinger, the inn-keeper, Mittenhof, the coffee-house-keeper, and Masson, the director of the post-horses department, at most just attended to the drawing of legal instruments, without troubling themselves about anything else but their own affairs.

Thus it is that everything falls off when those who are in power only think of what they get, and look on the people as a means of enriching themselves. At such times the boldest lose heart and keep themselves retired, while they wait till the opportunity offers itself of claiming their rights again.





CHAPTER VI.

ABOUT that time Chauvel made a hurried appearance among us; he had taken the cross-road from Saverne over the hill to gain half an hour on the mail-coach, and set off again directly. We were just counting our money; I had shut up the shop at ten, when he suddenly came in with his cloak over his shoulder, and said to us, quite out of breath—

“Here I am, my children; I come to embrace you as I pass; I am off again directly.”

Only fancy our astonishment. Chauvel was on his road to Paris. He was just the same, but stooped a little; his cheeks were hollow, and his eyebrows white; his eyes, which were always bright, became dim for a moment as he took up the little boy and kissed him. All the time he remained in the back shop he did nothing but walk up and down with the child in his arms, looking at him and smiling.

“He is a fine boy,” he said at last; “when he is six he will know the catechism of the rights of man by heart.”

I had sent my brother Stephen to tell Elof Collin,

and then to keep a look-out and let us know when the coach was coming. Margaret cried; I was pale enough, when I thought how soon we were to part again.

Elof came in late, only a few minutes before the coach, and I recollect how he sobbed when he spoke of Robespierre, Saint-Just, and the traitors. Chauvel was calm, and said—

“It is a great misfortune—men are but men; you cannot make gods of them; they last a little while, and they fail. Danton and Robespierre were two great patriots; Danton loved liberty, Robespierre did not; it interfered with his ideas of authority; that was the cause of their fall; they could neither live together nor do without one another; but principles remain for ever; half the objects of the Revolution are accomplished; the peasants have their share; they have the land tithe free and privilege free; the other half remains to be done; the workmen must also have their share as well as the peasants; let them also enjoy the fruits of their labours. That can only be by instruction and liberty; liberty levels, privileges accumulate; then follows a general breaking up; the Revolution will finish by justice for every one, not before.”

He said several other things which I do not now recollect; then the coach came, tears and embraces began again, and this good patriot and excellent man went his way.

All that just comes back to me like a dream; after so many years I have seen it all once again in a second, and I still feel as I did then. It was at the end of Prairial; assassinations had begun in the South. At Lyons, Marseilles, Arles, Aix, Tarascon, &c., the Royalists massacred the patriots in the prisons; they

danced round heaps of dead bodies. The associates of Jéhu and Le Soleil, organised by the Girondin deputies, stopped carriages on the high road, cut the throats of the Republicans, and plundered the public treasuries. All France began to cry out; but the Convention, which was full of reactionists, refused to listen.

The Thermidorians themselves began to see that they were not wanted in the Chamber now the insurrection was quelled, and that old accounts would soon be raked up; they felt their heads shake on their shoulders, and they began to draw closer to the Montagnards, who had remained firm at their post.

What proves that the insurrection had been prepared by the Royalists is, that soon after reprisals and the extermination of a crowd of Jacobins, Dantonists, and Hebertists, the famine in Paris ceased.

The principal harvests, however, had not yet been got in in July; whence came, then, that quantity of grain and provisions which had been hidden during the famine? Did any one ever see plenty before harvest? Does corn rise from underground in sacks? When one reflects one is obliged to acknowledge that this famine insurrection was a planned affair of the Royalists to crush the people and give them a king.

Let them talk to us as much as they will that France is a monarchical country; they were obliged to cut off men's heads to render it so! If a good reckoning had been kept we should have seen more fall after Thermidor than before, without mentioning treasons and numberless other crimes. Affairs at home and abroad all went on towards the same end. As soon as the blow had been struck in Paris the gazettes announced that an English fleet had appeared off the coast of Brittany;

then that this fleet had driven ours back into the port of Lorient, and that it was disembarking cannon, ammunition, émigrés, and forged assignats wholesale; that the Chouans and other brigands in La Vendée had begun to stir again notwithstanding their oaths and their promises, and were preparing to join the enemy. If we were once defeated the proclamation of Louis XVIII. would not have been long in making its appearance.

Louis XVII., son of Louis Capet, had just died while in the hands of Simon the shoemaker, and the Comte de Provence was already proclaimed King of France by the émigrés and despots of Europe. This comedy would have made us laugh if three-fourths of our representatives had not been in treaty with the foreigner. The whole nation trembled; we were afraid to read the newspapers for fear of learning every day some fresh disaster.

Happily Hoche, who was no Léchelle, and who had been named general-in-chief of our forces in La Vendée, hastily collected some troops and marched against the enemy. There was a report that twenty thousand Chouans and ten thousand English, commanded by three or four thousand ci-devant gentlemen, were marching on Rennes by the Paris road, and then we heard that Hoche had shut them up in the peninsula of Quiberon, by means of a line of intrenchments mounted with cannon; that he had carried the château of Penthièvre at the entrance of the passage, and poured such showers of grape on the rebels that the greater part, closely pressed by our columns, had thrown themselves into the sea, and the rest had laid down their arms without terms.

The Thermidorians, who had united themselves with the last of the Montagnards, sent their friend Tallien down on a mission to Hoche; and Tallien, recollecting that the émigrés were no friends to him, ordered them all to be shot on the spot, and shot they all were to the number of seven hundred and eleven. The peasants were sent away unpunished. It was a great blow to the aristocracy.

Great was the country's satisfaction when it heard these good news after so many quite the reverse. The name of Hoche was in men's mouths; they called to mind his former victories on the Rhine and the Moselle, and every one said—

“There is the man for us!”

Unfortunately the Republic was penniless. There was no Cambon at the treasury; millions and millions of assignats were issued, and no one would exchange them for bullion. All the tradespeople raised their prices, for the law fixing the highest price had been withdrawn; a pound of candles cost six francs, a pound of tobacco twelve, and everything else in proportion.

A few leagues from us, on the other side of the Rhine, the same commodities were sold at ordinary prices. Instead of doing away with assignats, the Royalists of the Convention preserved them to ruin us; never was such disturbance in business known, for without the law of the maximum the assignats could have no circulation, consequently no one can conceive what smuggling was carried on then, the more so that the English stopped all sugar, pepper, coffee, &c., on the high seas; these things were beyond all price; our children had no idea what they were like. Our armies were in want of everything, while selfishness, roguery,

and immorality pervaded all ranks. You might even meet with these dandies at Phalsbourg, idiots dressed à la victime with white funnel-shaped cravats up to their noses, a crape hatband, talking without opening their mouths, and looking at you over their shoulders by means of opera-glasses.

It would have been amusing if one had not recollected that fungi like these only grew upon dead wood, and the Republic was breeding them by thousands. Five or six abandoned women, after having played the part of Goddesses of Reason or Nature under Robespierre, also aspired to the character of "victimes." They wore their dresses flat as a sheath, with loose girdles, worn with a melancholy air. But we could hear them laughing and amusing themselves every evening at the Swan Hotel, with the exquisites, the sons of former tax-gatherers, controllers, and cattle-inspectors under Louis XVI. These cunning creatures had even invented large pockets which hung down to their heels, and which they called reticules; they used to put handfuls of assignats in them, and their handkerchiefs embroidered with tears, as emblems of grief. What fools people are! When one has lived only sixty years, the recollection of all the follies which have had their day turns one's head; one cannot believe they ever were possible.

The worst was that a crowd of former monks and Royal curés made their appearance, looking about right and left, like rats coming out of their holes as night comes on, and they dared to insult our patriot curés, such as M. Christophe of Lutzembourg.

This brave curé Christophe had not left home for five years; he lived by his labour, carving furniture, and keeping his school, without asking assistance from

the Republic. He bought his few necessary articles at our shop, and was very sorry he did not see Chauvel as he passed through.

Since the birth of our little Jean-Pierre I had seen my mother two or three times standing in the shadow of the old market opposite, and watching our home at a distance; there she stood, under the old pillars near the box of Turbin, the cobbler, very attentive, with her grey hair pushed back under her cap, and her poor linen gown falling in fringes over her sabots; she seemed to me to be grown very old. When I saw her thus, through our little windows, it made my heart ache. I ran to the door to call her, and ask her to come in, but that moment she disappeared, by the stairs at the back, into the Rue du Cœur-Rouge, and I could not find her anywhere in the neighbourhood.

The idea came into my head that she wanted to see our child, and that by this means we should be reconciled. Only thinking of such a possibility brought tears into my eyes; but I said nothing about it to Margaret, as I was afraid I might be mistaken.

And my old father would often say, as he nursed the child and looked pleased at me, he would often whisper—"If your mother saw him, Michel, she would bless him, she would bless us all."

And as he said the same thing to me one Sunday in our bedroom, I asked him if he really thought so—if he was sure she would be glad to see the child.

"Am I sure?" said he, putting his hands together. "Yes, yes, it would be a great joy to her. But she is afraid to come here, she has said so much against your wife; she is ashamed."

Then, without listening to anything more, I took the child in my arms, and said to my father—

“Let us go there at once.”

“Where?” said he in surprise.

“Where? to Baraques.”

“And your wife?”

“Margaret will be quite satisfied; do not be afraid.”

The poor man followed me trembling into the shop. I said to Margaret—

“My mother will be so glad to see the child; I am going to take him there, and I shall be back by mid-day.”

Margaret turned pale; she knew all my mother had said against her; but she had a heart, and she was incapable of blaming me when I was right.

“Go,” said she; “let your mother see we at least are not so hard-hearted as she is. I can never forget she is your mother.”

When he heard her say that, my father took both her hands in his. He tried to speak, but said nothing, and we set out at once. When we got into the path to Baraques, through the corn-fields, he began to sing Margaret’s praises, her kindness to him and every one else. His eyes were full of tears. I did not answer him; I was thinking how surprised my mother would be, and not by any means sure how she would receive us.

At last we entered the village, and passed the Three Pigeons, and other cottages, without stopping. The old street was nearly empty; for, besides the crowd of recruits and old soldiers who were still with the armies, many patriots were in permanent requisition for the transport of provisions and ammunition. Women and old men were employed getting in the harvest.

My mother, who was now too old to work, passed her time in spinning, which brought her in five or six liards a day; my father earned eight or ten sous basket-making, and Claude, Mathurine, and I made up the rest for the support of the poor old couple, without saying anything about it. So that, with the exception of old age, which always makes us rather ill and dismal, they had never been so well off.

It was very fine. All the orchards were full of fruit—apples, plums, pears hanging from the branches, overlooking the hedges, just as it was in the happy time of our childhood, when Nicolas, Claude, Lisbeth, and I used to run about barefooted and ragged in the dusty roads, or the Valley des Roches, with many others, three-fourths of whom were already dead.

As these recollections crowded into my mind, it made me feel serious. Two or three old women looked out of their garret-windows at me without recognising me; thousands of bees and flies flitted about the foliage; men pass on and disappear, but a sight like this is eternal.

As we turned the corner of our old street, I saw my mother sitting on the doorsteps of our cottage. It was Sunday, and she had her best clothes on and her shoes; she was telling her beads.

She knew nothing about Primidis, or Duodis, or Tridis, nor Floréals, nor Prairials, &c., which seemed to her to be inventions of the devil. She said her prayers alone, and the sound of our steps made her turn her head, but she never stirred.

I thought she was angry with me still. It was a foolish idea, for she no sooner saw the child than she stretched out her two thin hands; she tried to rise, but

sat trembling down again. I put the little child into her lap without saying a word—in fact, I was too much affected to speak. She laid him on her knees and sobbed as she kissed him, and then she said—

“Come, Michel, and let me kiss you too. Just now I was thinking I must go to the heretic to see my children. God in His goodness has sent you here to me.”

Then she kissed me.

Then she took off the wrappers which covered the boy, and when she saw what a fine, strong, healthy child he was, she gave way to her delight and pride. She called to her neighbours, Gertrude and Marianne, to come and see him.

“What a beautiful boy he is, and how like he is to our Nicolas!”

The good women hurried in, and there we were all, my father, mother, and myself, and the two old women, leaning over the child like children over a nest they have just taken. We laughed and talked, but my mother’s voice was to be heard above all the others. These toothless old women made faces at the child, which smiled at them in return. This lasted a quarter of an hour, and then old Saint-Hilaire came limping up to us. They were all in ecstasies about his healthy and plump appearance, for you may believe after five years of distress and famine there were not many such children to be seen at Baraques. My mother, in her pride, said—

“You are a good boy after all, Michel, to have brought him here.”

My father had never seen her in such good-humour. He whispered to me—

"I told you so."

They were all sorry they could not give the boy apples and pears, who as yet had not a tooth in his head.

About midday the child began to cry, and my mother, notwithstanding the pleasure she took in showing him to everybody, saw he wanted to be fed, and that it was time to take him home again. So she wrapped him up again carefully, and came with us as far as the glacis, quite proud and happy to carry him.

I wanted to persuade her to come home with me at once, but she said—

"Another time, Michel—another time, by-and-by."

My father made me a sign not to press her, because the pleasure she then had might turn to pain.

So she came no farther, and put the child into my arms, saying—

"Now make haste, for the child wants its mother."

She looked after us as far as the Porte de France, and then she called after me twice—

"You must come again, Michel—you must come again."

I made a sign to her that I would.

And so I was thus reconciled to my mother. Margaret was pleased to hear this good news; she was very well satisfied on my account.

Everything seemed to promise that some day or other my mother would make up her mind to come and see us. We agreed never to talk to her about the past. When you have nothing pleasant to say it is better to hold one's tongue; and, besides, it is better to forget the troubles of this world than to be constantly reverting to them.

We had fresh annoyances enough every day, without bringing old ones back; nor were we without uneasiness either. During the months of August and September, 1795, the danger which six months previously had been impending over Brittany and La Vendée turned in our direction. For five months the army of the Sambre and the Meuse, commanded by Jourdan, and that of the Rhine and Moselle, under the orders of Pichegru, had not stirred. They were in want of everything—arms, ammunition, and even officers, who had been dismissed by the traitor Aubry, who replaced Carnot in the Committee of Public Safety.

It had not yet been arranged that half the contributions or taxes should be paid in hay, straw, barley, oats, &c.; so that the Republic was obliged to pay for all in assignats, and issue more and more.

We were blockading Mayence on the left bank. Wurmser and Clairfayt on the right were only watching for an opportunity of invading us again. When the harvest was over we expected there would be some change; and about this time our business suddenly extended itself in a most extraordinary manner. The town swarmed with soldiers in rags who were on their road to Strasbourg. You could hear nothing but the noise of soldiers on the march from morning till night—drums, trumpets, and then the sound of old shoes dragging along the pavement as battalion and regiment marched past; the “Ho! ho! ho!” “Vive la République!” “Allons, enfans de la patrie!” &c. The officers and non-commissioned officers stop as they go by to have a glass of brandy, and then run off to join the columns—in fact, the signs of approach.

ing war never ceased, and our shop was always full of soldiers.

These good fellows looked on me as a veteran. We used to shake hands together; and more than once I thought of taking up a musket once more, putting on my cross-belts, and falling in. I fancied I could hear the roll of the musketry, and the shouts of "Forward! forward with the bayonet!" I felt cold and hot all at once, as one does when one hears them beat the charge, and one sets off left leg first. But the sight of our little Jean-Pierre in Margaret's arms quieted me down, and I drew back into my shell, very well satisfied to have my discharge in due form. Besides, the manner our Convention acted did not induce patriots to risk broken bones in defence of its dishonest decrees. They said—"When we are once gone who is there to come after us? Royalists, dandies, women like the Cabarrus, old attendants, and the aristocratic shopkeepers of the court all round the Tuileries; the rascally brood of assassins in the South, who will call out again for their son of Saint-Louis, their Count d'Artois, and the émigrés. No, no. This Convention will soon come to an end, and then we shall see."

Of course we were never paid in gold, or fifteen or thirty sous pieces—we could not have given the change required. A louis was worth fifteen hundred francs in assignats. Where could we stow away such an amount of paper? The old sous saved us. Every week I filled a box with three or four hundred livres, strongly nailed and fastened, and I gave it in charge of Baptiste for Simonis, who sent me back the receipt and fresh goods in return.

After the people's defeat in Prairial the traitors let

everything go to ruin ; their newspapers never left off reviling the Republic, their clubs preached rebellion, and at home we heard of nothing but chauffeurs (robbers who held the feet of their prisoners before a hot fire to make them say where their money was concealed) in ambush in the woods, and who stopped carriages, plundered the farms, and stripped the Jews. A band of these brigands had burnt the feet of old Leiser and his wife at Mittelbronn to such a degree that the poor old creatures died from the effects. Schinderhannes scoured the country from Alsace to the Palatinate, and every time Baptiste went to Strasbourg he carried a pair of long horse-pistols in his belt, and his loaded musket and his sabre in the straw at the bottom of his cart. I remember one day when there was a report that the band had stopped the courier under the rocks by Holderloch, he would not take charge of my money, as it was getting dark. In order to give him courage I was obliged to seat myself by his side and escort him as far as Saverne. If Schinderhannes had made his appearance that night, he would have made acquaintance with Sergeant Bastien, of the 13th Light Infantry ; but everything was quiet ; the same evening I came back from Saverne by the short cut, that I might not let Margaret remain uneasy. But such was the state of distress to which the seventy-three had reduced our country ; their hope was to oblige us to ask for a king by dint of crime and treason, for they would never dare to unmask themselves, and openly declare themselves Royalists ; our Republican armies would soon have paid them a visit by forced marches.

They therefore named a commission of eleven members to prepare the new constitution, and all the

patriots trembled when they thought they were to receive laws at the hands of the Royalists.

This constitution was decreed the 17th of August, 1795, under the name of the Constitution of the Year III.

It first of all declared that order rested on property only, from which every one could understand that he who had not inherited an income, or who had not acquired property by no matter what means, like Tallien and many others, was nothing and nobody; money took precedence of courage, probity, ability, devotion to one's country, and every virtue whatever.

It furthermore declared that representatives should be nominated by the electors, and that every elector should be chosen by two hundred citizens aged at least twenty-one, and who paid a direct tax; therefore, to be qualified to make an elector or a representative, one must pay a tax of two hundred working days.

Three-fourths of our ancient Mountain representatives could not be nominated according to this constitution; we could have only those who were in accord with the Prussians and Austrians in Champagne, and with the Royalists and English in La Vendée, for representatives of the French nation. Let any one see, then, after that, if Danton, Marat, Robespierre, and the other Montagnards were wrong in distrusting these Girondins, who were in such a hurry to ruin what the nation had taken so much trouble to do.

This fine Constitution of the Year III. also informed us we were to have two Councils instead of a Legislative Assembly—the Council of Ancients, consisting of two hundred and fifty members, none to be less than forty years of age, and the Council of Five Hundred. The

Council of Five Hundred was to bring forward laws and discuss them, and the Council of Elders was to approve of or reject them; moreover, in place of the Committee of Public Safety we were to have a Directory of five members charged with the execution of the laws by ministers named by themselves, to treat with foreigners and direct the movements of our armies.

So these honest people, who have always been considered victims, and who in '93 passed themselves off as persecuted Republicans, re-established—first, the “veto” of Louis XVI., which they entrusted to the Council of Ancients; secondly, the ministers, which they conferred on the Directory; thirdly, the right of making peace and war; fourthly, active and passive citizens, besides the two steps to be taken in elections as before '89. All that remained was to put one man in the place of the five directors, and the trick was done. One might as well say at once the Revolution was no more, and that the kings who had been completely beaten by the Republic had gained the victory.

For all that, the affairs of the country were in such a state of disorder that this constitution was accepted; at Phalsbourg, Collin, Manque, Genti, I, and five or six other patriots were the sole dissentients. But, as a climax of abomination, the reactionaries of the Assembly, dreading lest the people should send Republicans to the Council of Five Hundred instead of Girondins and Royalists, decreed that two-thirds should be named by the members of the Convention itself. Then we saw what was enough to excite the risibility of all men of any sense—we saw a number of dandies and aristocrats, who fancied they were going to be elected by the

people, rebel against this decree, and cry out that the Convention was infringing the sovereignty of the people; one could see through the grasping selfishness of these young gentlemen, who rose in opposition to their own party, because it did not put the best employments at their disposal. All wealthy young men and rich shopkeepers rose in insurrection; the Convention was obliged to call on the Jacobins for assistance, and put arms in their hands once more.

The Jacobins were only too happy, to crush those men who had been keeping them down ever since Thermidor, and the old foxes of the Convention dreaded seeing their young friends' revolt exterminated; they were all, young and old, looking out for themselves, but the quarrel between them was not mortal; the old had an understanding with the young; they would have done the same had they been in a similar position. So General Menou' had orders to be as mild as he could with these misguided youths. Menou arranged matters so that on the simple promise of the insurgents to disperse themselves he withdrew his troops.

It all seemed to have blown over, but these novel insurgents, when they saw the troops retire, imagined the Convention was afraid of them; they remained under arms, and began to talk about conditions. Then the Convention was obliged, reluctantly, to replace Menou by Barras, the general of the 9th Thermidor, and Barras chose for his lieutenant a Jacobin, the Citizen Bonaparte, who had been put on half-pay by Aubry as a Robespierriist. He was not so scrupulous; he immediately armed the men of the faubourgs, remembering he had an old score to settle with the

gentlemen of the section Lepelletier, and the environs; he collected some artillery and ammunition, and the people of the faubourgs marched against these aristocratic middle-class gentry, who were very roughly handled. Bonaparte cut them up with grape most pitilessly on the steps of the church of Saint-Roch. The Convention was in despair, but the young people wanted a lesson; five hundred were left for dead, and the affair, which began in the afternoon, was over by nine in the evening. Instead of employing vigorous means against the vanquished, as in Germinal and Prairial, the Convention this time was tender and pitiful; it only shot two insurgents, and transported no one. After all, it was only their own friends, the Royalists, who had displayed rather too much zeal in grasping at public property, and that was excusable. Their companies were broken up, and that was all. The Jacobins had muskets and cartouches in their hands again; they might have turned them against the Assembly; but the patriots were disgusted. Those they loved were dead! Who could they put in the place of Danton, Desmoulins, Robespierre, and Saint-Just? Certainly not Legendre, Tallien, Fréron, and similar men.

These commotions in Paris had attracted our attention; we talked about them every evening in the book-shop, but our thoughts soon took another turn: war was approaching in our direction; the fortress was strengthened as in '92; numerous troops on foot and mounted marched through; some came from the Army of the Alps, some from La Vendée, and everywhere. The great struggle would be once more on the Rhine, the Meuse, and the Moselle. We could hardly serve all the customers who came, and one day, just as I

was sitting down to dinner, Margaret gave me a letter, saying—

“That came this morning. An old soldier from La Vendée wrote it. He said you were to go to Fénétrange ; but we have so much to attend to, you cannot be away.”

I looked at the letter ; it was a note from my old comrade Sôme, who was going with our battery to the Army of the Rhine and Moselle, under Mayence, and he had made a circuit of fifteen leagues to have the pleasure of seeing me.

When I read it I became very pale, and said to Margaret—

“Why could you not have given me this letter when it came this morning at seven ? See now, one of my oldest comrades, a man by whose side I fought every day for months together, goes fifteen leagues out of his way to shake hands with me, and the poor devil never sees me.”

“I thought it was some old drunkard,” said she.

I was so angry my indignation prevented my making her any answer, and seeing Murot’s courier pass, I took up my hat, and called out, “Stop ! stop !”

I had not a sou in my pocket. Father Murot stopped in the middle of the road, I jumped up by his side, and we set off at a round trot. For a quarter of an hour it was impossible for me to say a word, and as Murot kept looking at me with astonishment, I finished by telling him all that had happened.

“Never mind,” said he, “you were right to be angry. All wives are alike : they never think of any one but their husbands and their young ones.”

He went on talking, but I did not listen to him. When we got to the steep hill into Wéchem, seeing how

slowly the carriage went along, I grew impatient. I borrowed a crown of six livres from Murot, and continued my route on foot, climbing the hill like a deer. The idea that my poor Sôme was waiting for me, and that perhaps he would be obliged to set off without seeing me, made my heart ache. I passed Metting, Droulingen, and all the other villages in succession without stopping anywhere. At three in the afternoon I had gone five leagues, and I arrived at Fénétrange. The first words I spoke when I walked into the room of the Auberge de l'Etoile was—

“Is he gone?”

“Who do you mean?” asked Father Bricka.

“The man who was waiting for me.”

“The sergeant of artillery?”

“Yes!”

“He waited a long time for you, but he has been gone more than an hour.”

I was so grieved at arriving too late that I began crying—

“Poor old fellow! poor old fellow! To come so far! what a misfortune!”

Then, while drinking a pint of wine and eating a crust of bread, I wrote my good old comrade a long letter telling him how it all happened, and begging him to excuse me. I put it in the post myself, paying the postage, and I set off home reflecting on the selfishness of women, for the best are selfish; they think one ought only to care for themselves and their children.

I reached Phalsbourg late; the gate of the town was shut. I was obliged to call up the old warder Lebrun and get him to let me in.

When I reached our shop I saw there was a light

still through the cracks in the shutters. I knocked gently twice; Margaret opened the door; she had been crying; that affected me a good deal. I began to make some excuse, but she was so glad to see me again; she confessed she was in the wrong! so that instead of being angry with me, as I was afraid she would be, she thought better of me than ever, if that was possible.

You see I understand a woman's disposition very well. They like men to be frank, and even to speak sharply to them sometimes, and tell them plainly what they think; you must always be in the right with them, and make them obey you when they ought to do so; if not, they will all, from first to last, get the best of you and make you march at the word of command.

This little affair made Margaret still more anxious to please me. It was I who read the letters in the morning, and I who gave orders, of course after consulting my wife.

But still I was grieved at not having seen my friend once again, for affairs were growing so serious that we never knew whether we should ever see a comrade again.

Jourdan had passed the Rhine at Dusseldorf; he was moving up the right bank; of course every one thought he was acting in concert with Pichegru, who could not fail to cross the river also either at Huningue or Strasbourg and fall back on our enemies together. Every day we expected to hear the news that the two armies were acting in concert on the right bank; so it went on for three weeks, and Pichegru never stirred. Jourdan had put himself between the two armies of Wurmser and Clairfayt. The idea of treachery began to gain ground, especially with old soldiers like myself,

who knew what it is to wait for succour which never arrives. I had seen sufficiently terrible examples of it.

At last we heard that Pichegru had finally made up his mind, and that he had crossed the Rhine at Mannheim unopposed.

All over Alsace and Lorraine victory was anticipated ; we expected a courier every hour to say that Jourdan and Pichegru had joined forces at Heidelberg, and so keeping the two hostile armies separate, and that they would destroy them one after the other. Pichegru had only to advance, but he sent only two divisions into action, which were outmanœuvred and massacred. Clairfayt entered Heidelberg victorious. Jourdan, threatened in the rear, crossed the Rhine again at Neuwied ; the enemy re-entered Mayence, crossed the bridge, and obliged us to raise the blockade on the left bank. Pichegru let them take nine thousand men prisoners whom he had left for no object at Mannheim when he recrossed the river, and then he hurried in full retreat to the lines of Wissembourg.

About this time thousands of wounded arrived at Phalsbourg. They could not take half of them in the hospitals ; they filled our villages. Many came through Metz ; all the householders supplied beds ; both our barracks were full of these poor creatures, like those of Angers, Saumur, and Nantes, after Laval, Mans, and Savenay. Those who had never seen such a sight before thought all the wounded in the world were coming to Phalsbourg ; they did not know that generals never tell the truth about their losses, and that they always report less than the truth.

One morning as I was opening my shop several convoys came in by the Porte de France. Mattresses had

been laid down in the old market on the pavement in the open air. It was already cold by the end of October; for this mass of wounded, the greater number of whom had not had their wounds dressed since Kaiserslautern, Hombourg, and Deux-Ponts, almost spread a pestilence along their route.

As the carts were drawing slowly up to the place where they were beginning to unload them, the citizen Dapréaux, chief apothecary at the military hospital, came to tell me that one of the wounded wanted to see me.

I went there at once, and what should I see but my old comrade Sôme lying on a mattress against the great pillar in the middle of the market; but he was so livid, and his eyes were so sunk in his head, that I hardly recognised him.

"It is I, Michel; do you not know me?"

I stooped down to embrace him, but he smelt so bad that my heart failed me. I was obliged to lean against the pillar. He noticed it, and said—

"I have a ball in the hip; take me somewhere else; I can dress the wound myself."

The idea of having such a smell in the house frightened me; fortunately Margaret had followed me.

"Do you know this man?" said she.

"Yes," said I; "it is my poor comrade Sôme."

She immediately told them to carry him to our house by the door in the lane, into the room upstairs, where there was a bed; and as at that moment five or six more were brought in on litters one after the other, I went away, thinking, "How horrible it was that those you love the best should disgust one so!"

But in many things women have more courage than

we; the Supreme Being grants us that consolation; otherwise what would become of us? Three-fourths of the sick would be abandoned.

Margaret had already prepared everything upstairs; a few moments afterwards the litter arrived. As I was in the shop I could hear the steps of the hospital attendants going upstairs, without daring to follow them; still I had seen slaughter enough in La Vendée; but when one is always surrounded by such troubles, and one is always, so to say, between life and death, at last one pays no attention to them.

For the first week no one but Dr. Steinbrenner and Margaret went into the room. The old midwife, Marie-Anne Lamelle, who lived on the same landing, was obliged to leave; she could stand it no longer. Margaret cut out the bandages and made the lint. The doctor came one morning with his hospital companion, Piedfort, to extract the ball. They had trouble enough to do it, for Sôme, one of the toughest men I ever knew, cried out so that I could hear down below.

Enough about these horrors.

At the end of three weeks my poor old comrade was able to walk on crutches, and began to laugh again, and say—

“Well, Michel, so I have got over it again this time; your wife has taken good care of me; if it had not been for her good soup I should have had marching orders for the next world.”

He was right. How many, for want of attention, were buried in the new Poplar Cemetery on the road to Metz! Many years after, when they made the road to the Champ de Mars, when people saw the quantity of bones which had been dug up, they used to stop and say—

“How white their teeth are! and not one wanting!”

I can well believe it; they were all young men from twenty to thirty in '95. Pichegru, for the sake of honours and money, had caused two whole divisions to be massacred, without mentioning those who fell during the retreat. The villain had been in treaty for some time with the Prince de Condé to surrender Huningue to him, and to march together on Paris. This is one of the heroes of the Royalists! In fifteen days he had destroyed by treason more Republicans under his orders than the Committee of Public Safety had guillotined traitors and aristocrats! These were the people who never ceased groaning when the Terror was mentioned. They must think the peasants are fools, but I can tell them they are mistaken; the people, after having been cheated for sixty years, are beginning to see clearly now; they do not care to hear fine phrases and grand expressions, they want the truth.

No one then thought Pichegru, the conqueror of Holland, could be a traitor; I distrusted him, but I dared not say so; but the first time Sôme was able to sit at table with us, with our child on his knees, he explained things to us, and when he looked at me I could see we were of the same opinion. He ended by saying as the Parisian federalists did in '92—

“O Marat! true friend of the poor people, they began with you; your clear-sightedness troubled them, and they plunged a knife in your heart. You only saw through Dumouriez, Custine, and Lafayette, and you would have brought this one also to the bar of justice; he would not have had time to strike his first blow.”

I never heard my old comrade talk as he thought, as he did that day. Margaret, Elof Collin, Raphaël, and

other patriots who were there spoke of Danton, Robespierre, and Saint-Just; but he, snapping his fingers in scorn, cried—

“Bah! bah! No doubt they were good patriots, but—only children; they finished by quarrelling! Marat would have made them agree: he had more sense than all of them together.”

Sôme went too far, as it always happens when one gets angry. The ball in his hip put him out of humour; besides, the poor old veteran adored Marat, just as I did Danton, and Elob Collin loved Robespierre. It is the fault of us Frenchmen that we attach ourselves more to men than to principles, and we attribute to them every virtue and every talent imaginable the moment they defend our ideas; we cannot do without leaders! This unhappy national weakness is the cause of our greatest misfortunes; it has divided Republicans among themselves, it has driven them to destroy one another, and finally it has ruined the Republic.

Chauvel was the only patriot with whom I was then acquainted who put principles before individuals; and he was right, for men pass away, and principles remain for ever.





CHAPTER VII.

WHILE Pichegru was allowing the Austrians to slaughter his divisions the fresh elections were taking place, and soon after the gazettes informed us that the Convention had declared its mission at an end, and that the newly-elected representatives had been chosen, according to their ages, to sit in the Council of Ancients or of the Five Hundred; that the Council of Five Hundred had then elected fifty members, from among whom the Council of Ancients had named our five directors—Lareveillière-Lépaux, Letourneur (de la Manche), Rewbell, Barras, and Carnot—to replace Sicyès, who declined. These directors were to be renewed one at a time from year to year; they were capable of re-election. One-third of the Councils must be elected afresh every year.

When the Convention dissolved itself on the 26th of October, 1795, it had lasted three years and thirty-five days, and had passed more than eight thousand decrees. But after the 9th Thermidor, and the return of the Girondin Royalists, the few just men

and thoroughgoing Republicans who remained in this assembly could not prevent the others, who were a majority, from openly ruining the Republic. All honest men, therefore, were glad to see it come to an end.

The 15th of November we received a letter from Chauvel, announcing his intention of returning to Phalsbourg; and the next day but one, a Tuesday, when it being market day we were extremely busy, we saw him come into the shop with his little leather valise in his hand, just as it was crowded with baskets, hampers, and the great hats of the mountaineers. It was a pleasant sight for a man of business like Chauvel. We both came from behind the counter and embraced him with a satisfaction it is easy to comprehend.

"Now, my children," said he gaily, "go back to your business—we can talk by-and-by; and I will go, and warm myself in the book-shop."

For three hours, through the window of the back shop, he could see what a thriving business we were doing. His eyes were bright with pleasure. Those of his acquaintance among the peasants and patriots in numbers went in to shake hands with him. We served our customers in a hurry, then had a word or two with him, and then back again to the counter.

It was not before one, when the dealers in grain, vegetables, and poultry had turned their steps homewards, that we were able to dine and converse in comfort. What pleased Chauvel the most was, that owing to our extensive trade in liquors, and grocery and haberdashery, we had great facility for circulating patriotic books and newspapers in any quantity. He walked up and down our room with the child in his arms, and said—

“ This is just what we want. In other days, when I wandered about the country with my hamper on my back, it tired me too much. Now when people come to us we have them all within reach. They are closing our clubs; but we will have a club in every cottage—even in the depths of the mountain. And instead of reading stories of bandits and witches in the evenings, people shall read accounts of heroic deeds, of citizens’ generous actions, of their discoveries, inventions, useful undertakings; the advancement of commerce and manufactures, cultivation in all its branches—in fact, of everything useful to man, instead of deadening his understanding and rendering him superstitious by way of helping him to pass the time. We shall do an immensity of good.”

He was very glad, too, to see my old comrade Sôme. At the first glance they understood one another, and shook hands like comrades of old standing.

The same evening, after supper, Raphaël Manque, Collin, the new rabbi Gougenheim, Aron Lévy, Maître Jean, and my father having come, as soon as there was an end to the greetings and exclamations which ensued as usual, we began to talk politics.

Chauvel explained our actual position to us. He said that in the present state of affairs, amidst the divisions which were tearing us to pieces, and with ruin hanging over our heads, while the nation was becoming daily more discouraged, the patriots and their friends ought to be doubly prudent. On Maître Jean Leroux observing that, as the constitution of the Year III. guaranteed what he earned to every man, the Revolution was, so to speak, an accomplished fact, Chauvel briskly replied—

“You are greatly mistaken, Maître Jean; this constitution settles nothing. On the contrary, it leaves everything open to discussion. It is the work of the Royalists and the bourgeoisie in order to keep the people from power, and to deprive them of their just share in the conquests of the Republic over despotism.

“When I say that the bourgeoisie is the accomplice of the Royalists in this abomination, I ought to make a distinction between the honest bourgeois and the intriguer who involves him in his manoeuvres; the true bourgeois are sons of the people who have raised themselves in life by their education, their intelligence, and their courage. They are the merchants, manufacturers, contractors, advocates, attorneys, doctors, artists of every description—all those who, with the workmen and the peasantry, constitute the wealth of a country.

“All that such men as these desire is liberty; in it lie their strength and their future; without it, all the bourgeoisie, the true—that which in times gone by insisted on the abolition of wardens and companies; who later still drew up the claims of the third estate in all the provinces, and which, by its firmness and good sense, forced king, nobility, and clergy to give way—without liberty this brave, this substantial bourgeoisie, the honour and glory of France for ages past, is lost! But by the side of this there unfortunately exists another, which owes its being only to places under government, pensions, monopolies, and privileges; which surrendered everything to the king in order to receive the spoils of the nation from his sacred hands.

“A bourgeoisie such as this has no desire for liberty ;

liberty is the superiority of labour, understanding, and integrity to intrigue; it prefers owing everything to the generosity of a king or a stadtholder, it gives less trouble; their children are brought up in the same career; they are taught to bow and sweep the ground with their hats in the presence of the great, and they have made a good choice: their future prospects are safe.

"It is this bourgeoisie which has just passed the Constitution of the Year III., in spite of our opposition. They have a majority in consequence of the entry of the sixty-three Girondins into the Convention after Thermidor, and all the other Royalists.

"The blow which was foreseen by Danton, May 31, 1793, then was easy to strike; we had nothing more to say! These gentlemen have settled their elections by two stages—their two Councils and their Directory; as they were in want of support, the wretches have dragged the true bourgeoisie into complicity with their iniquity by making them fear the people, and giving them their share of the profits."

Chauvel spoke so clearly that no one had a word to say.

"Well," continued he, "when they insisted that a man must either possess property or the interest of an estate paying taxes of the rated value of two hundred working days to qualify for the post of deputy, what did these honest people do? Why, they separated the bourgeois from the people, and made them enemies. They still believe that the people, after the Revolution, as before it, are going to give their blood and the fruit of their labours for such a bourgeoisie as they are, who intend to govern by means of a constitutional king, a fat

man, whose business it is to eat well and drink well, while they turn the country to their own advantage. The place of this constitutional king is set down in their constitution; the Directory occupies it provisionally; indeed, many proposed sending for the king at once. Unfortunately, Louis XVIII. hopes for something better; he means to accept no constitution whatever; he stands on Divine right, like Louis XVI. and Louis XVII.; he intends to be absolutely master, and surround himself with nobles instead of bourgeois. That perplexes them not a little! But a people stripped of its rights does not perplex them at all; they are sure it will give in—the fools!”

Chauvel leant across our little table, and laughed, and while we listened in silence, he continued—

“Do you know what all this proves?” said he; “why, that there is no end to the Revolution, the Revolution is continuous; you must be blind not to see it. Let a Danton appear some day; in three years, or four, ten, or even twenty years hence, his army is ready to receive him—a plundered people who ask for justice! Danton speaks, the Revolution breaks out again; king, princes, and intriguers are banished; the respectable part of the bourgeoisie ruined, its business interrupted, its industry gone; it pays for all, while the placeholders escape with the money until the storm has blown over. Then they return with their prince, and make up their constitution with fresh bourgeois, for the others have not a sou left; they themselves are always on good terms with his Majesty. Business begins again, but still the question remains undecided. This time, instead of Danton, it is a fortunate general who marches on Paris, calling out—

“‘I come to defend the rights of the nation.’

“The people would be silly indeed to oppose this general; it is the Revolution beginning again. And so it will begin again and again until the bourgeoisie quit the ranks of the aristocrats and intriguers, who make use of their name, until they coalesce frankly with the people, and with them insist on liberty, equality, and justice, and recognise in the Republic the only government possible with universal suffrage. Then there will be an end to the Revolution. Who will there be to disturb order in the country when the people and the bourgeoisie are one? Every citizen will hold the rank he is entitled to by his works, his intelligence, or his virtues. He will then be able to live without fearing to lose all from one day to another. I warn you now, young men like Michel will see revolution succeed to revolution so long as the separation of the bourgeoisie from the people shall endure, so long as a workman can say, when speaking of a bourgeois—‘He is a privileged person.’ The Constitution of the Year III. will be the cause of very great misfortunes. Far from being the final settlement of everything, as Maître Jean imagines, it will keep civil war alight for years.”

All his friends present listened to Chauvel with pleasure, and my comrade Sôme got up from time to time to go and shake hands with him, and say—

“That is it; I think as you do, citizen; the Revolution can never be over until the bourgeois of education put themselves at the head of and support the Republic. The bourgeoisie is the head-quarters’ staff of the nation. Unfortunately, we have no longer such bourgeois as Danton, Robespierre, Marat, Saint-Just, Camille Desmoulins—for they were all bourgeois, lawyers, doctors,

men of talent, fit to ring the tocsin, raise the sections, and march at the head of the people."

"No," replied Chauvel, "the Revolution has swallowed them all up. For that reason the aristocrats no longer dread the people of the faubourgs, for they are without leaders. The nation itself is tired of domestic troubles; the last famine especially, before the insurrection of Prairial, has completely exhausted it. Now the Royalists are in search of a general capable of seducing his army to act against the Republic. If they find one the bourgeois are lost; they will call for help in vain! the people they betrayed will let them lie; and this is how the educated part of the nation, the industrious bourgeoisie, will become paralysed, because it had not the courage to be just towards the people, to raise it and educate it, to give it its share in the government, to raise it to the highest employments if it is fit for them. Let idlers fall and disappear; let those who will work rise; let each man's works mark his place in the nation's ranks, and not his money—that is the object of our Revolution. If the bourgeois will not so understand it, so much the worse for them. If they attach themselves to the Royalists, they will be all carried away together; for the Republic will end by triumphing all over Europe."

Chauvel liked making speeches. I cannot call to mind all he said; but I remember the principal points; for if we have not seen a Danton put himself at the head of affairs again, there has been no want of generals, even English, Prussian, Austrian, and Russian, who in the end came to rub their boots clean on our bodies. That fact keeps one's memory alive; and I

have always been of opinion that the Constitution of the Year III. was the cause of it.

At all events, that evening every one was pleased at having cleared up his ideas on our constitution, and we determined to meet occasionally to discuss the affairs of the country.

The next day Chauvel gave his attention solely to our business. He had already looked into our books—our profits, our debts, and our credit. I remember the third or fourth day after his arrival, he ordered such a quantity of Republican catechisms and gazettes that I thought he was mad. He laughed and said to me—

“Don’t be afraid, Michel; what I buy I am sure to sell again; I have already provided for that.”

Towards the end of the week there came packets of little notices, printed by Jâreis, of Sarrebourg. These little notices, about the size of the palm of your hand, contained—

“Bastien-Chauvel sells ink, pens, paper, office-fittings; he also deals in groceries, haberdashery, military stores; he also retails brandy and liquors; he lets out books at the rate of thirty sous a month, &c., &c.”

“But,” said I, “what are we going to do with all these bills? Are we going to send men to stick them up in all the villages in the country? You know that more than three-fourths of the peasants do not know their A B C; what can be the use of going to such an expense?”

“Michel,” said he, “those who see these notices can all read; we shall paste them inside the covers of the books we let out and sell; they will circulate everywhere, and then people will be acquainted with the fact that Bastien-Chauvel sells almost everything.”

This seemed a brilliant idea to me ; for fifteen days we spent our evenings in pasting these notices in the books in our library, in the catechisms of the rights of man, and even on the almanacks, which had a greater sale than anything else.

Other grocers, mercers, ironmongers, and sellers of wine and brandy cried out, when they saw our shop full of customers—

“What can be the reason that house attracts the whole town? People repair there as if they were going to a fair!”

Some said the house being at the corner of the street was the cause, others because the market was opposite; but it really was the result of our advertisements, which published the name of Bastien-Chauvel abroad, and made our business, and what we dealt in, known for three or four leagues round Phalsbourg. It then happened that other tradespeople, seeing how we progressed, began to deal in the same articles. I was very indignant, but Father Chauvel made light of it, and said to me—

“So much the better, Michel; the poor devils know no better; they are obliged to follow us, and we always keep ahead of them. This is progress, free trade; and when we seek freedom for ourselves we must seek it for all. The only thing we could prevent would be if any rogues or rascals were to put the name of Bastien-Chauvel on inferior goods, then justice would interfere. Their trade would not last long, for the honest people of all parties are in league against rogues; this it is which originated the institution of tribunals, and which causes justice to be so respected.”

Our little business went on better and better after

Chauvel's return, nevertheless this was a very bad winter in consequence of the enormous quantity of assignats, which was always increasing, and which no one would take.

The Directory was forced to issue fresh assignats, for we had no money for the payment of our armies, or our public officers, or the law courts, and we were nearly in despair. It was necessary to pass a decree that half the taxes should be paid in hay, straw, and grain of every description to feed the troops. This was a most obnoxious measure, for the peasants having got possession of the best part of the national property for next to nothing, would not hear of it; selfishness and ingratitude spread everywhere; and if we look closely into it we can see what folly it was, for if our armies had not been kept up the nobility would have come back, and the peasants would not have kept their lands.

During this winter Hoche finally pacified La Vendée, which had risen once more, in the expectation of the arrival of the Count d'Artois. But this son of Saint Louis and Henry IV. was a coward! After having first landed at the Ile Dieu he refused to enter La Vendée, notwithstanding Charette's entreaties, and returned to England, abandoning the unfortunate people who had risen in his favour.

Hoche pacified the Bocage and the Marais by destroying the insurgents, by allowing those who remained quiet to rebuild their churches, and by taking Stofflet and Charette, and having them shot, which did him very great credit.

After this he pacified Brittany in like manner by exterminating the Chouans as he had the others. He said to the peasants—

“Remain quietly at home; pray to God; bring up your children. Under the Republic we are all free, except the banditti who want to have everything without working for it.”

The great majority of the people was at that time so weary and unhappy, that it only asked for peace and quiet. In Paris they amused themselves as usual, they danced and gave parties, and indulged themselves in all sorts of dissipation. I speak now of the Five Hundred, the Ancients, and the Directory, of their wives and servants you must understand. Sometimes when Chauvel read about these things he shook his head, and said—

“The Directory will turn out ill, but it is not entirely their fault; there has been such an amount of suffering, the people have lost so much blood, men in power have been so severe, both as regards themselves and others; they have rendered virtue such a burden, so painful, that now the nation, utterly discouraged, believes in nothing, and gives itself up as lost. May God grant that our generals remain patriots and honest men! For now who is there to unmask them, bring them to the bar of justice, try them, and condemn them? What the Lafayettes and Dumouriez found so perilous to attempt, those of to-day could accomplish without trouble.”

What gave us all great pleasure, and delighted Sôme, was to hear that Pichegru had been deprived of his command. Some papers had been discovered in Paris, in the house of a man named Lemaître, which proved that he, Tallien, Boissy-d'Anglas, Cambacérès, Lanjuinais, Isnard, the originator of the companions of Jéhu, and several more, were corresponding with the

Count de Provence, who at that time called himself Louis XVIII. They ought to have been arrested and brought to trial, as in other days; but under the Directory the Republic was so weak—so weak that the least effort seemed too great for human exertion. It was only strong enough to crush the patriots who called for the Constitution of '93; these were abused by everybody; one would have thought they were guiltier than the traitors who were plotting to sell their country.

So the winter passed.

The enemy who had been threatening Alsace and Lorraine made no serious attempts, thinking the reaction at home was making sufficient progress, and that they could march into Paris without fighting.

About the end of March, Sôme, who was quite restored to health, left us to join his battalion with the Army of the Rhine, of which Moreau had just taken the command; and about six weeks later I received a letter from Marescot, who was at that time with Lisbeth with the 13th provisional demi-brigade, formed the 13th Ventôse of the 1st and 3rd battalions of volunteers of the coast. He wrote to me from Cherasco, in Italy, April, 1796.





CHAPTER VIII.

IT was the spring of the Year IV.; the report of great victories in Italy began to spread; but we were much more uneasy at home about the armies of the Sambre and the Meuse, and the Rhine and the Moselle, which were about to open the campaign, than about Italian affairs. What could it matter to the Republic to know that sixty or even eighty thousand Austrians were on the other side of the Alps, since twenty thousand men advantageously posted in the mountains could prevent their making an irruption into France? We ought to be satisfied with that; they lost a good third of their force in protecting this country; while we, on the contrary, if we went to attack them, we should require as many men as they, and consequently be obliged to withdraw troops from Brest, Cherbourg, the frontiers of the Pyrenees, and even from the North and the East, as, indeed, we were compelled to do later. One decisive battle on the Rhine would cause the fall of the Republic; men of good

sense saw it would be so; but, notwithstanding, these repeated victories astonished everybody.

When we read Marescot's letter our astonishment increased, for my brother-in-law, like all his fellow Southerners, was addicted to exaggeration. At the top of his letter he had copied Bonaparte's proclamation:—

“Soldiers, you are badly fed, and nearly naked; the government owes you everything, and can give you nothing. I am about to lead you into the most fertile plains in the world. There you will find honour, glory, and wealth. Soldiers, will your courage fail you?”

After that the rascal began to sing victory after victory, at Montenotte, Millesimo, Dego, and Mondovi. I fancied I could hear him; he did not talk, but call, and shout, and dance, as he did when Cassius was born; shooting, burning, nothing came amiss to him; plunder, plunder, that was his business. From time to time he paused to say there was not such a general above ground; General Bonaparte! all the others were mere tyros in comparison with him: Kléber, Marceau, Hoche, Jourdan, none of them came near him. Next to Bonaparte he only acknowledged Massena, Laharpe, Augereau, and some others belonging to the Army of Italy. Then he began again, and mixed up with these things accounts of the good prizes he had already taken, the satisfaction of Lisbeth, the good looks of Cassius; and flourishing about these new names of La Bormida, Cherasco, Ceva, &c., which we had never heard before.

I shall remember Father Chauvel's face when this letter was read in our library as long as I live. He bit his lips, he groaned, and then he fell into a reverie, and sat looking straight before him. Bonaparte's pro-

clamations especially attracted his attention; he read them over again almost aloud. When Marescot asserted that, small man as Bonaparte was, he was greater than Kléber, big as he was, Chauvel smiled, and muttered—

“Your brother does not take largeness of heart into his account; the heart, too, takes up some room and contributes to the height. I have seen your Bonaparte, and we know one another.”

Marescot finished his long letter by saying that from where his battalion was encamped he could see the whole of Lombardy, with its rice-grounds, rivers, cities, and villages, and at the back of all, more than a hundred leagues distant, the white summits of the Alps! He said all was theirs which they were about to invade; that the Supreme Being had destined everything for the brave; he pressed me very much to return to a soldier's life, telling me promotion was rapid; that for the future there would be no delay either in our rations, or in our pay, or anything else—in fact, the greediness of a freebooter.

Lisbeth, who did not even know her letters, had no doubt heard this letter read over to her, for at the end she had made five or six crosses, as much as to say, “It is all true! I think so too. Pleasure, battles, and promotion for ever! We must have everything, we must keep all we can get, and I must be a princess!”

This letter caused a great stir in the place; I had lent it to Maître Jean; the next day Maître Jean lent it to somebody else; it circulated all over the country, and people said—

“Bonaparte is a Jacobin, an old friend of Robespierre; he cut the Royalists to pieces in Vendémiaire;

he will finish his work by establishing the rights of man again."

Every day we heard the same thing said over and over again.

Our former club on the Place d'Armes had been opened again after Thermidor, and for some months past the old apes attached to the ci-devant Cardinal Rohan, the old salt monopoly, or the collection of tithes, brought forward their motions for the recall of the émigrés, the payment of indemnities to the convents, which had been abolished, and similar measures. Not one man of any sense ever went to hear them; they were obliged to preach to one another, which annoyed them greatly.

But one Friday, some days after the arrival of Marescot's letter, the patriots who had come to attend the grain and vegetable market invaded the club. Eloi Collin had prepared a long speech; Maître Jean Leroux wanted them to sign an address to the Army of Italy, and pass a vote of thanks to its general-in-chief, the citizen Bonaparte; and Father Chauvel suddenly put on his jacket, took up his cap, and hurried out. It was about eleven, just as the market was over. We did not know what had become of him, when we heard a great noise in the market-place. I looked out of our door; Chauvel was coming back, followed by a crowd of black-guards, who were abusing him, pushing him about, and they would have proceeded to blows if he had not taken refuge in the guard-room under the archway of the town-hall.

Of course I ran off to his assistance. He was as pale as death, and trembled, while he called out to the officer on duty—

“Keep these wretches off! these cowards who attack an old man. I put myself under your protection.”

Many of the men on duty turned out to meet him. I was indignant at not seeing Maître Jean, nor Raphaël Manque, nor Collin, nor any one about him to take his part. He had just made a violent speech against those unprincipled patriots who always take the stronger side, who shout victory with the conquerors, and throw themselves at the feet sometimes of a Lafayette, sometimes of a Dumouriez, and now of a Bonaparte, to have their share of the plunder—against creatures without convictions—and substitute their own interest and selfishness to justice and right.

He had made an attack on Bonaparte’s proclamation, which every one else thought sublime, saying Schinderhannes could have made no better to his banditti; he might as well have said, “You love wine, women, fine clothes; no one will trust you, and the treasury is empty; come with me; I know a rich farmer in Alsace, where the inhabitants have been working and economising from father to son for the last hundred years. Let us break into it and rob it! Are you afraid?”

Then there broke out such a storm against him, that big Schlachter, the woodcutter of Saint-Witt, went up to the tribune, and took him by the collar, and had not Chauvel been a strong man, though small, he would have thrown him down on the pavement.

Schlachter had met his match; but Chauvel, seeing none of his friends come forward in his defence, left his place with his clothes almost torn off his back. At last, amidst insults and blows, he gained the door and crossed the market-place. I remember, as he stood on the steps of the town-hall, with his grey hair in disorder,

and one of his cheeks covered with blood, he turned round, and cried out in a terrible voice to some women who were running after him—

“Wait, wait awhile, and your children will pay for this! it is with their flesh and blood that kings will be brought back again! you will weep, wretched creatures, then, and call out for liberty and equality! but you will have the masters you deserve, and you will think of Chauvel then!”

“Silence, brute!” “Silence, Marat!” the women called out.

He came into the guard-room. I felt as if I had not a drop of blood in my body. He sat down on a bench, and wiped his cheek with his handkerchief, and asked for some water, which the soldiers gave him in a can.

“Go quietly home, Michel,” he said to me; “this is nothing; we shall see worse scenes than this. Margaret might be frightened; the fools might, perhaps, break our windows and pillage the shop. Now such things are in fashion, and everything is lawful spoil, I should not be surprised if they did,” he added bitterly.

I was just going, when Margaret arrived, as pale as death, with the child in her arms. It was the first time I had seen her so distressed, for she had a great deal of resolution. Chauvel himself was much affected for a minute or two.

“After all,” said he, “we are not to be pitied; but these poor creatures who have been brought up to look on such outrages with admiration.”

He then gave me the child, took his daughter by the arm, and we set off together by the door opening on the market. A picket of soldiers escorted us; but,

thank God! the crowd had already dispersed; they had not gone near us.

The curé Christophe was the only friend we met when we got home; he thought as Chauvel did, that they might go and plunder the house, and there he stood at the door with his thick stick. When we arrived he opened his arms, and cried—

“Chauvel, I must shake you by the hand; what you said just now was after my own heart; unfortunately I went out by the other way, and I could not get to your assistance.”

“It is better thus,” replied Chauvel; “if there had been the least resistance, the blackguards would have killed us both. Such, nevertheless, are the men who twice elected me as their representative,” said he sadly. “I have done my duty conscientiously. They may choose another now, but that will not prevent me from saying what I think of this Bonaparte, who talks neither of liberty, nor of equality, nor of virtue in his proclamations, but of fertile plains, honours, and wealth.”

Chauvel had been so ill-used that he remained more than a week in bed in consequence. Margaret nursed him; I went to see him every day; he was always pitying the people.

“They still cling to the Republic,” he would say; “but as the Royalists and rich bourgeois are now masters of everything, as they have excluded the people from the Constitution, the mass have no chiefs, and they put their trust in our armies. Last month Jourdan was to serve us all; after Jourdan, Hoche, then Moreau, and now Bonaparte is to be our salvation.”

Then he talked to us about Bonaparte, only a

general of brigade, commanding the artillery of the Army of Italy in 1794; he said this dark, spare little man, with square jaws, bright eyes, and pale complexion, was like no one else; his impatience of superior authority was perceptible in his eyes; he was indignant at having to obey the representatives of the people, and had but one friend, the younger Robespierre, hoping thereby to gain the interest of the elder brother. But after the catastrophe of Thermidor he quickly attached himself to Barras, who had been his friend's executioner.

"I saw him," said he, "in Paris, after Menou was removed from the command of the troops, because he had shown himself too indulgent towards the revolted bourgeois. Barras even sent for him to come to the Tuileries; and there proposed to him to take charge of the affair as second in command. It was in the large hall which serves as a vestibule to the Convention. Bonaparte asked for twenty minutes to decide; he stood leaning against the wall, his head bent and his hair hanging over his face, and his hands crossed behind his back. I looked at him, in the midst of this turmoil of representatives and strangers, coming and going, talking, and inquiring for news. He never stirred! And mark me, Michel, he was not thinking then about his plan of attack; that was to be conceived at the time of action; what he was considering was, 'How can I turn this affair to my own advantage?' And he answered his own question thus: 'Excellently well! The struggle lies between the Royalists and the Jacobins; I care as little for these as for those. The constitutional Royalists have the bourgeois at their backs, and the Jacobins have the people. But, as the Pari-

sian bourgeois have taken a false step when they rose against the additional act, and the re-election of the two-thirds, which have been accepted in the provinces, as they compel the majority to retire or to force themselves to give way, in every case I have nothing to lose and everything to gain. I shall arm the Jacobins and the faubourgs, who will consider me as one of themselves, and I shall have obeyed the orders of the majority by cutting the rebels in pieces. Barras is a fool, and I will leave him all the glory of the affair, while he shall obtain me some good employment—perhaps a chief command—and I shall climb up over his back.’

“I am perfectly certain, Michel, that these were his reflections, for after all there could have been no reason for hesitation; he did not even wait for the expiration of the twenty minutes, but went and declared his acceptance of the proposition at once. One hour later all his orders were despatched, and cannon came in the course of the night; the sections were armed; the next morning at four the cannon were in position, with lighted matches; the affair began at five, and was over at nine. Bonaparte was immediately provided for; he became general of division, and Barras, since then named Director, married him to one of his friends, Josephine Beauharnais, and gave him command of the Army of Italy. Bonaparte is too clever and too ambitious to declare against the people for the constitutional party. Our other generals have been deficient in nerve; they want to manage matters too gently; people do not know what to make of them—they simply obey orders. He boldly declares himself a Jacobin, and treats in his own name; but then he sends to Paris money, colours, and pictures.

"I know no man more dangerous; if he goes on gaining victories he will have the whole nation on his side.* The selfish bourgeois, instead of leading our Revolution, will be led by it; the people they have robbed of their right of voting, and whom they want to rule with a constitutional king, will consider them their chief enemies; they would rather serve under Bonaparte than be the lacqueys of a few intriguers who are trying to cheat them out of their rights one after the other, and whose intention is that a great nation should disturb the whole of Europe to assure the continuance of their own enjoyments. That is how we stand now. We have to choose between violence and artifice; the nation is tired of rogues. If the constitutional party cannot see it, if they persist in their present deceitful policy, Bonaparte, or any other general, has only to guarantee the possession of national property, to require an account of the rights of man, and declare that he calls for it in the name of the people, and all these fellows will be swept away in an instant. Justice, and justice only, can stand against violence; but if the people are to make a stand for justice the others must begin by restoring its rights; we shall soon see if they have the good sense to do so."

So spoke Father Chauvel.

But I must confess one thing, of which I repented afterwards, and which I would very willingly have passed over in silence had I not promised to tell you the whole truth; and that is, after having seen so much suffering when I was young, after having begged on the high road, kept Maître Jean's cows, and seen misery in all its shapes, I was very happy to find myself living like a bourgeois, and everything which disturbed my

business put me out of temper. Yes, it is a sad thing to confess, but it is the truth. For a poor devil like me to have loaves of sugar hanging from the ceiling of the shop, and the drawers full of salt, pepper, coffee, cinnamon, and copper money, was something extraordinary. I never could have hoped for anything like it; and to sit at my own table, look at Margaret with my little Jean-Pierre sitting on my knee and calling me "papa," softened me much; I dreaded seeing this happy state of things disturbed, and when I heard Chauvel find fault with everything and exclaim against the Directory, councils, and generals, and insist upon the necessity of a second Revolution to put everything in order, I used to grow pale with anger. I used to say to myself—

"He wants too much! Things are going on well, trade is beginning to look up, the peasants have their share of good things, so have we; all we want now is stability at home; what more can we require? If the *énigrés* and priests endeavour to upset the government we shall be always at hand and our Republican armies too; why anticipate evil?"

Such were my ideas then.

I have no doubt that Chauvel saw through me. He would sometimes inveigh against those who sat quiet and contented with their own lot, little thinking how easily they would lose everything they had for want of having exacted firm and final security—that is to say, the government of the nation by itself.

I understood he was talking at me, but I made no reply, and I persisted in thinking everything for the best.

In the meantime victory succeeded to victory. Bonaparte having destroyed the Piedmontese army, and destroyed that of Beaulieu, passed the Po, entered

Milan, defeated Wurmser at Castiglione, Roveredo, and Bassano; Alvinzi at Arcole, Rivoli, and Mantua; the Pope's army at Tolentino, and made him cede Avignon, Bologna, Ferrara, and Ancona. At the same time Jourdan and Kléber, after the victories of Altenkirchen, Ukerat, Kaldieck, and Friedberg, took the fort of Kœnigstein, and entered Frankfort. Moreau passed the Rhine at Strasbourg, took the fortress of Kehl, won the battles of Renchen, Rastadt, Ettlingen, Pfortsheim, and Nèresheim, drove the Austrians back upon Donawerth, and reached into Bavaria, to join Bonaparte in the Tyrol. But the Archduke Charles, with superior forces, having surprised and routed Jourdan at Wurtzbourg, Moreau executed his masterly retreat across Suabia, all up in arms, fighting every day, destroying whole regiments of the enemy, forcing the defiles of the Val d'Enfer, after a last victory at Biberach, and bringing his gallant army safely back to Huningue.

Never were soldiers more attached to their general than those of Moreau; they were all old Republican soldiers, who did not grumble at going barefooted, and were, so to say, proud of their rags. Sôme was with them; he wrote us a few words which affected Chauvel.

"These," said he, "are men of the right sort; there is no need of telling them about fertile plains, honours, and riches."

What made us laugh was Sôme's admiration for the pipe Moreau constantly smoked in battle; if it was a sharp affair puffs followed quickly one after the other; when it slackened the pipe became quieter too. How childish this is! But good people wonder at everything, and they make long stories out of nothing, but they do not boast of their own performances.



CHAPTER IX.



THE winter of '96-'97 was quiet enough. Jourdan, beaten at Wurtzbourg, had been dismissed. Beurnonville, already known for his campaign at Trèves in '92, and by his imprisonment at Olmutz after the treachery of Dumouriez, took the command of the army of the Sambre and the Meuse. He purified it of the rogues who abounded in it, cashiered the commissaries, expelled the contractors, shot all plunderers, and for the first time appointed officers paymasters. Unfortunately there were more desertions than ever. All the officers friendly to Jourdan resigned their commissions. Things were looking serious.

The Austrians crossed the Rhine at Mannheim, they marched into the Hündsdruck, some hours distant from us, and were beaten at Kreutznach. We entered in November; a suspension of arms followed, and we went into winter quarters from Mannheim to Dusseldorf.

But in Alsace everything was still in motion. Before he crossed the Rhine Moreau had thrown some battalions into the fort at Kehl, on the right bank, to keep a footing in Germany. Desaix was in command; the

Archduke Charles besieged him with his whole army. He opened three lines of trenches before this corner of ground; they could hear the roar of his guns day and night at Strasbourg, and even as far as Phalsbourg. The Austrians lost there between twenty-five and thirty thousand men; they were also besieging Huningue at the same time. At last, after enormous losses both in men and money, they were glad to accord the defenders the honours of war. The French entered Alsace with their guns, arms, and baggage, singing, waving their torn standards, and beating their drums.

About this time there was a great talk about an expedition under Hoche to the coast of Ireland, but it seems a storm dispersed our fleet; and again of a movement of Bonaparte upon the Tyrol, of the departure of the Archduke Charles to take the command in Italy, and of a detachment of twenty thousand men from our army of the Rhine under the command of Bernadotte taking the same direction.

These things were of great interest to us; but Chauvel paid little attention to them. The elections—the re-election of two-thirds of the Five Hundred—alone excited his enthusiasm, for if the elections were favourable he still hoped to make up for lost time.

“The Republic has nothing to fear now from foreigners,” said he. “Three-fourths of the despots are now helpless; all they ask is to make peace, if we will agree to it, but the conditions of peace ought to be discussed by the representatives of the nation, and not by the Royalists, who would surrender all we have gained to their friends abroad. The fate of our Revolution, then, depends on the forthcoming elections.”

Preparatory meetings had already commenced at

Sarrebourg, Droulinguen, Saverne, &c., and this indefatigable grey-headed old man had begun his work. Every morning he rose between four and five. I could hear him go downstairs to the kitchen and cut himself a slice of bread; with that in his hand the brave old man set forth, and traversed the mountains in all directions for four or five leagues, making speeches, encouraging the patriots, and denouncing the reactionary policy of their opponents. Fortunately the curé Christophe and his two big brothers from the Hengst went with him. Had it not been for them the aristocrats would have taken his life. Maître Jean, Collin, Létumier, and all our friends repeatedly said to me—

“For the love of Heaven, Michel, try and keep him at home! The Royalists have the upper hand in the whole of the ancient county of Dagsbourg. You know what a half-savage set they are, and he is just gone there to set them at defiance, and oppose the former monk Schlosser, and the ex-hermit Grégorius. The national gendarmes themselves are afraid to go into such a cut-throat district, where the only argument they employ is the knife. He is sure to be murdered, and one of these days you will have him brought home on a litter.”

I felt they were quite right, and as I knew well the fanatics and Royalists in the mountain had sworn to have the lives of all the Republicans they could find in their district, I ventured to make an observation to that effect to my father-in-law, and begged him not to risk himself there, pointing out how useless it would be; but in reply he said some very hard things about the selfishness of upstarts. I got very angry and left the room. Margaret ran after me. I wanted to leave the whole

affair at once and join the army again. Chauvel set off, and Margaret's tears kept me at home. The same day, about four in the afternoon, the news arrived that there had been a riot at Lutzelbourg, and that several had been killed. So, notwithstanding I was so angry with my father-in-law, the recollection of all the good he had done us—of his good advice and of his confidence in me—softened my heart. I set off at once, and reached the valley that night. The village square was crowded with men carrying torches of resin, which shone over the Zorn. The patriots had had the best of it; but the two brothers of the curé Christophe and several others had been terribly beaten. Chauvel, most luckily, had escaped without injury, and I heard him addressing an immense assembly of men and women who had come some of them from a distance of three and four leagues. His voice was so clear I could hear it a long way off, in spite of the noise of the crowd and the sound of the water running through the mill-dam. He called out to them—

“Citizens, we are the nation! We are the real sovereigns — we woodcutters, peasants, workmen, and artificers of all sorts. We are the people, and the government must be for the people; for it is they who appoint, they who labour, they who pay, and they who make the others live. If that race of idlers and intriguers who called in the Austrians, and the Prussians, and the English—who have been beaten a hundred times in the ranks of our enemies—now succeeds in naming who shall be our representatives, it will be as if we had done nothing. Our directors, our generals, our judges, our governors, will all be traitors because they were appointed by traitors, not for us,

but against us; not for our good, but to rob us, to grind us down, to load us with taxes and reduce us again to our former state of servitude. Beware, then. Those whom you elect as your representatives will be your masters. Let every man, then, think of his wife and children. It is unfortunate enough that many among you have lost your votes from not paying sufficient rent to qualify you. The former elections were the cause of that. The enemy is moving on by stealth, but prudently. Be careful, then, and let your choice fall only on good men who are known to have your interests at heart."

Chauvel went on speaking in this strain for some time longer, and every minute he was interrupted by murmurs of satisfaction. M. the Curé Christophe and several others spoke after him, and about nine the gendarmes appeared. The crowd, without being summoned, quietly dispersed—men, women, and children in troops—some in the direction of Garrebourg, some to Chèvrehoff or the Harberg. This was one of the last great electoral meetings I ever attended. As I was going home I fell in with Chauvel, who had quite forgotten our dispute, and said to me—

"You see, Michel, how things are going on. If my old comrades in the Convention follow in my steps, every man in his own district, we shall have a new majority. Our Directory is not so bad, but it wants elevating; it needs more vigour—it must be feared as the Committee of Public Safety was formerly; and this can only be if the people show themselves really Republican at the coming elections. What is the origin of all these disorders—these robberies by brigands in the provinces, these rascalities, this dis-

couragement of the people, and this insolence of the reactionary party? It all dates from the evil elections of the Year III. When the people have no longer the right of naming their own representatives; when direct taxation takes a man's place and alone gives him a right to vote; then can intriguers substitute themselves for the nation. They settle everything according to their own interests; they sell themselves for place, money, and honours, and sell their country at the same time."

We were indebted for this to those famous Girondins who were so much pitied while they were fugitives, Lanjuinais, Pastoret, Portalis, Boissy-d'Anglas, Barbé-Marbois; to Job Aymé, who once tried to raise an insurrection in Dauphiné, and to De Vaublanc, De Mersan, and De Lemerer, who have since been known as secret agents of Louis XVIII. These men made use of the Republic to annihilate what Republicans remained; they profited by the conspiracy of a fool named Babœuf, who wanted an equal division of land, to exterminate some hundreds of patriots, by insisting that they belonged to his band. But they allowed the Royalists—Brottier, Duverne, and Lavilleurnois—to conspire undisturbed; they permitted the assassins in the South to continue their course of crime, and the émigrés to return freely; they let the bishops form associations similar to the Jacobins, with the view of throwing the nation into confusion and of proclaiming the king. These men refused their support to the Directory! Such was the state of things that traitors were at the head of affairs, and forced the Republicans to turn their eyes towards their armies, to find some general capable of bringing the Royalists to reason.

There was the misfortune! From that day to this, these men have never lost their hold; sometimes by force, sometimes by stratagem, but oftener still by treachery, they have tired out the boldest citizens; it was a standing conspiracy of idlers, allied to foreign despots, to bring the people again under the yoke, and make them labour for their advantage.





CHAPTER X.

DURING the months of March and April, 1797, Chauvel did not fail to attend every primary and communal meeting. These meetings were not the sole cause of the agitation in the country, but also the great preparations making by Moreau for passing the Rhine again, the replacement of Beurnonville by Hoche in the command of the Sambre and Meuse army, and Bonaparte's proclamation, stuck up on the door of the clubs and the town-halls, as he was about to open the campaign:—

“ Bonaparte, General-in-Chief of the Army of Italy, to the Soldiers of the Army of Italy.

“ Head-quarters, Bassano.

“ 20 Pluviose, Year V. (March 10, 1797.)

“The taking of Mantua has just concluded a campaign which gives you an everlasting claim on your country's gratitude. You have gained the victory in fourteen pitched battles and seventy actions. You have made more than a hundred thousand prisoners, taken five hundred field-pieces and two thousand heavy guns,

and four pontoon trains from the enemy. The contributions you have levied from the countries you have conquered have fed, kept up, and paid the army during the whole of the campaign; moreover, you have sent thirty millions to the Finance Minister for the relief of the public treasury. You have enriched the Paris Museum with more than three hundred objects, the masterpieces of ancient and modern Italy, which it has required thirty centuries to produce.

“You have conquered for the Republic the finest countries in Europe; the Lombard and Cispadine Republics owe their liberty to you; French colours are floating for the first time on the shores of the Adriatic, opposite to, and only twenty-four hours distant from, ancient Macedonia; the kings of Sardinia and Naples, the Duke of Parma, and the Pope have separated themselves from the coalition of the enemy; they have courted our friendship. You have expelled the English from Leghorn, from Genoa, and from Corsica; but you have not yet finished. A great destiny is in reserve for you; in you the country puts its dearest hopes; you will continue to be worthy of that trust. Of the many enemies in coalition to destroy the Republic at its birth, the Emperor alone faces us; lowering himself from the rank of a great power, this prince has taken the pay of the London shopkeepers; he has no longer any policy or any will except of those perfidious islanders who, strangers to the horrors of war, smile with pleasure at the ills endured by the continent.”

He went on in this manner, and ended by declaring that this campaign should destroy the house of Austria, which by every war for the last three hundred years lost a portion of its power, which rendered its subjects

discontented by depriving them of their rights, and would soon find itself reduced to accepting wages from England.

Every one understood from this that the war would extend once more from the Low Countries to Italy, and the farther we went the more we should have to fight. Our position, however, was better now, for instead of having the enemy at our doors, as in '92 and '93, we were about to attack him at home, by the Tyrolese mountains; the Archduke Charles, the best Austrian general, was there already to oppose Bonaparte's farther progress. Fresh recruits passed in detachments through the town, and filled up the void made by the divisions, Delmas and Bernadotte being sent to the army of Italy.

These great military movements kept up business all along the frontier; we could hardly attend to the crowd which was always moving forward like a river which flows on for ever.

Chauvel only attended to political matters; he was always going to preliminary meetings somewhere or other; the Royalists looked upon him as their most dangerous enemy; they lay in wait for him on all the roads. Margaret lived in dread; she said nothing to me about it, but I saw it; I could hear it when her father came home about eight or nine in the evening, and she called out when she heard the bell, "Here he is!" with such a feeling of relief in the tone of her voice. She would run and put the child in his arms, then when he had kissed her, and had a glass of wine, and eaten a mouthful of bread, he would pace up and down the room and tell us about his battles, for battles they really were, where the émigrés, who

had now returned to France by thousands, relied for support on these constitutionalists of the Year III., the most hypocritical rulers France ever had at her head.

When I now think of it, how this brave old man sacrificed everything to freedom, and refused to accept the good things of this world for the sake of raising up the nation and keeping it from taking a wrong course, I must admire him.

But then the selfishness of a man who had nothing, and unexpectedly finds himself proprietor of a good business; who sees his worldly goods increase, and intends to fulfil the obligations into which he has entered; his family increasing—for a second child was about to make its appearance—the competition of others who do not trouble themselves with politics provided their affairs are in a prosperous state—all that often made me think—

“My father-in-law is mad! how can he alone influence the course of events? Have we not done our duty sufficiently? Have we not suffered enough during the last six years? Who can reproach us for not doing our duty? Let others risk their lives as we have, and make the same sacrifices; every man in his turn; we cannot be always fighting battles; it is contrary to common sense”—and so on.

I was very much vexed, because Chauvel would leave the shop on market days to hurry to these electoral assemblies, and make us lose some of our best customers by his speeches, and for caring as little about our grocery business as if it had never existed. I am quite sure that it was only the pleasure of selling gazettes and patriotic publications which kept him at home; had it not been for that we should have seen him wander-

ing over Alsace and Lorraine once more with his parcel of books on his back.

Well, all the efforts of this honest man, and of thousands of other Jacobins, were insufficient. It is generally in revolutionary times that we atone for our blunders; how many of those who had been sacrificed by Robespierre, Saint-Just, and Couthon, as not being sufficiently "pure," would now have been welcomed by us! They were dead! and bad men alone left with a wearied, discouraged, ignorant nation in the hands of a crowd of ambitious intriguers.

The elections of the Year V. were worse than those of the Year III.; the people no longer having a vote, two hundred and fifty Royalists entered the councils of the Republic, and joining the others, they immediately named Pichegru president of the Five Hundred, and Barbé-Marbois of the Ancients. That showed clearly how little they cared about the rights of man, and that they believed the hour was come to recall Louis XVIII.

The Directory was in their way, because it occupied the place belonging to the son of Saint-Louis. The newly-elected representatives determined to disgust it; they immediately commenced operations, and from the 1st Prairial to the 18th Fructidor, in less than four months this is what they did. After having replaced Letourneur by Barthélemy (a Royalist), they abrogated the law which excluded the relations of émigrés from public employments, and the decrees of the Convention against the traitors who had some time before surrendered Toulon to the English; they stopped the transportation of refractory priests; they reproached the Directory with having made treaties in Italy without the authority of the councils, which blame fell upon Bonaparte;

they authorised the assassinations and robberies which were going on in the West and the South, by refusing to help the government to put a stop to them; they endeavoured to rebuild and establish Roman Catholic churches once more, alleging that it was the religion of an immense majority of the French people, the religion of our fathers, our sole good, and the only one capable of enabling us to forget four years of bloodshed, as if the Vendéans, who were good Catholics, had not been the first to begin to massacre.

Two or three Jacobins promptly replied to them, and the Parisians seemed in such a bad temper that they adjourned the question for some time. They laid all the evils of the Republic on the shoulders of the Directory, the fall in assignats, the dilapidated state of the finances, and regularly refused everything it asked for. They never ceased exclaiming that the National Guard only could save the country; but no one who did not pay a certain amount of taxes could enter the National Guard; all the bourgeois would thus have been armed, and the artisans and peasants left unarmed! This was the cleverest part of their plan; by these means Louis XVIII., the princes, émigrés, and bishops could have returned without danger, and again taken possession of their estates and their dignities, and of all that the Revolution had won from them.

To divert public attention from their contrivances, their papers talked of nothing but the trial of Babœuf before the supreme court of Vendôme, just as thieves at a fair—one points out something for you to look at while his companion picks your pocket.

But neither this trial, nor the Italian campaign, nor the passage of the Tagliamento, the taking of Gra-

diska, the affairs of Newmarck and Clausen, the battle of Tarvis, the invasion of Istria, Carniola, and Carinthia, the insurrection of Venice in our rear, the preliminaries of peace at Léoben, and the destruction of the Venetian Republic, which was ceded by Bonaparte to Austria, the passage of the Rhine by Hoche, at Neuwied, the victory of Heddesdorf, and the retreat of the Austrians upon the Nidda ; the passage of the river by Moreau, under the enemy's fire, the retaking of the fort at Kehl, the general suspension of arms at the news of preliminaries of peace—nothing could prevent the patriots from perceiving that the Royalists in the councils were betraying them ; that they had drawn the bourgeois over to their side, and that the nation could only get rid of them by a last battle.

These men had, so to say, raised every sluice in France ; the filth from without was flowing in on us without a check ; Alsace and Lorraine were swarming with émigrés ; three-fourths of the town were converted, as they called it, to “the order !” Vows were offered up at the chapel of the Bonne-Fontaine for the return of the poor exiles ; our former curés officiated at mass ; all the old women went every morning and evening to Joseph Petitjean, the old chanter at the reading-desk, to listen to the preachings of a proscribed priest ; the authorities were well aware of it, but no one protested against it—in fact, we were sold.

Sometimes in the evening, while we were making up our parcels, Chauvel would say in disgust—

“What a pity it is to see a general like Bonaparte, who was yesterday nobody, threaten the representatives of the nation, and these representatives, elected to defend the Republic, destroying it with their own hands !

We must be fallen low indeed! And the people approve of all these exposures, who have only to say a word to put to flight this mass of intriguers at once and for ever."

And then he added—

"The nation puts me in mind of the negro who laughed and chuckled while he looked on at two Americans fighting, and called out at every blow that was struck, 'Bravo! bravo!' Some one said to him, 'You are laughing now, but have you any idea what those men are fighting about? To know which of the two shall put a rope round your own neck and drag you and your wife and children to the slave-market and sell you, or make you work, build prisons for you and your fellows, and flay your backs if you rebel.' At that the negro left off laughing, but the French people laugh still; they like to see the fighting, and do not trouble themselves about the consequences."

Every time Chauvel talked in this manner I said to myself—

"How can I help it?"

The satisfaction I felt, in earning from twenty to thirty francs a day, in having wine and brandy in my cellar, sacks of rice, coffee, and pepper in my store, had in some respect turned my head; and thousands of others were in a like state; the lower bourgeoisie wanted to raise themselves at any price. I may as well confess it at once, it cost us dear enough!

Nevertheless, the love of the rights of man and of a citizen had the upper hand in my heart from time to time, and I acknowledged that Chauvel was right in telling us to be on our guard.

At that time the newspapers said a great deal in

praise of a certain Franconi, a professor of slack-rope dancing, who was delighting the Parisians by his feats of horsemanship. He had his turn in the papers after Babœuf's trial, Bonaparte's campaigns, and those of Hoche and Moreau. It happened that this Franconi, during the fair at Phalsbourg in Thermidor, while on a tour through Champagne and Lorraine, came to our town with his troupe. He stuck his poles in the ground and set up a large tent on the Place, paraded his horses about, blew his trumpets, beat his drums, and announced his performances. Many people went to see him. I wanted to take Margaret to see him, though I knew it would cost me at least three francs; but when there was anything going on our shop was always so crowded with customers that it was impossible.

Everything would have gone off quietly if some of the Baraque people had not come one after the other to tell me that Nicolas was a rider in Franconi's troupe. When I recollected that if Nicolas unfortunately returned the laws of the Republic condemned him to death for having deserted with his arms and equipments to the enemy, I told them they must be mistaken, for we had proofs of his death; but they shook their heads. And on one of those very occasions when we were disputing about it, about six in the evening, in comes a tall fellow in a sky-blue coat and silver lace, a magnificent hat with a lofty white plume, gold spurs on his heels, switching his whip and calling out—

“Well, Michel, here I am. Since you won't come and see me, I must go out of my way to see you.”

It was the rascal himself. All the people in the shop stared at him. Of course, though I was very much

frightened, and after what I had just been saying, I was obliged to recognise him and embrace him.

Stephen, too, sprang into his arms. The wretch smelt strongly of brandy. Chauvel was looking at him from the window of the back shop. Margaret trembled, for she knew what was the law of the Republic against traitors. I was obliged to receive him all the same; and as I drew him into the library, I said—

“Come in.”

He hesitated, and then cried out—

“Ah! ha! you know I intend to sup with you. Have you got any good wine? Have you this? Have you that? I don’t conceal from you that I have the habit of taking care of myself now. Ha! ha! What have we here? That is not a bad-looking girl!”

“Nicolas, that is my wife.”

“So, the little Chauvel—Margaret Chauvel; the book-hawker. I know all about it.”

Margaret grew very red. People began to laugh. At last he walked into the library.

“What do I see! Old Chauvel too! All the family. So you have left off your book-basket?”

“Yes, Nicolas,” said Chauvel, taking a pinch of snuff, and winking his eye; “we have become grocers. We were not all lucky enough to become colonels in Franconi’s troupe.”

Only fancy how ashamed I felt. Nicolas did not seem over-pleased at being called Franconi’s colonel. He looked askance at Chauvel, but made no reply.

I was in hopes of getting rid of him by whispering in his ear—“In the name of Heaven, Nicolas, take care; the whole town knows you; remember the law against the émigrés——”

He gave me no time to finish, but threw himself into a chair, stretched out his legs, and began to call out—

“Emigré! Yes, I am an émigré. Honest people went away, and the rogues remained behind. Let them recognise me; so much the better. What do I care about the blackguards? We have plenty of friends, and in high places too; they call us home again; they open the gates for us. Do you see that? No assignats there. That is the key to your Republic. Ha! ha! ha!”

He thrust his hand into his breeches-pocket, and tossed a dozen coins in the air. What a sad thing to have such a drunken idiot for a brother, a traitor, and who was not ashamed of having sold himself, but gloried in it!

At last Chauvel, seeing how embarrassed and ashamed I was, said—

“Come, Nicolas, it is supper time; let us go and drink to the health of the Republic, and part good friends—come.”

Margaret came in with the soup; Stephen went to fetch the wine; the cloth was laid; there was only a plate more wanted. Nicolas looked at it with an air of disdain, and, without replying to Chauvel, said—

“Cabbage soup! Alsacian wine! I must be off to the Ville de Bâle.”

He got up, and then turned to my father-in-law, and

“As for you, there is a mark against you. Drink to the health of your Republic!” He looked at him from head to foot. “I, Nicolas Bastien, a soldier of the king, drink to your Republic! Wait awhile—the rope is ready.”

Chauvel, who was sitting down, gave him a look of contempt, and smiled; but he was old and weak; the bandit would have annihilated him. But I became so angry that I tried to speak, and could only articulate—

“Take care, Nicolas, take care; it is my father you——”

“As for you,” said he, turning to me, and speaking over my shoulder, “hold your tongue. When one marries the daughter of a Calvinist, a regicide, a little——”

That moment I seized him by the arm, as if he was in a vice. I dragged him along the shop, knocking his head against the sugar-loaves hanging from the ceiling, and, as the door stood open, I flung him several yards into the street. Fortunately, in '97 the street was not paved, or he might never have got up again. His shouts and oaths echoed in the street. Behind me were Stephen and Margaret, both crying out. All the neighbours were at their windows. Nicolas got up pale and grinding his teeth. He came up to me, and said—

“You’ve been a soldier; meet me at the back of the arsenal.”

“All right, Royal-Allemand,” replied I; “the sword I wore in the 13th Light Infantry is hanging up at home. Find yourself seconds; I shall be there in twenty minutes. You won’t run me through under the right nipple; I know the thrust.”

Stephen brought me my hat, crying all the time. I turned him out, and shut up the shop. Margaret cried—

“You are not going to fight your brother, surely?”

"Whoever insults my wife is no brother of mine. The affair will be settled one way or the other within twenty minutes."

And in spite of Chauvel, who cried out I ought not to cross swords with a traitor, I took down my sword, and went out to look for Laurent and Pierre Hildebrand to be my seconds. It was getting dark as I went down the street. Chauvel went up to the Town Hall. About a quarter of an hour after, my seconds and I were walking down the Rue du Rempart—they had cavalry sabres with them, in case of need. But we had hardly reached the Rue de l'Arsenal before we heard distant cries of—

"Halt! halt!—stop him!"

Nicolas galloped past the sentry on a great chestnut horse. The latter had no time to bring his bayonet to the charge, and cries of "Stop him!" were heard as far as the Porte d'Allemagne. We ran off in that direction; some national gendarmes from Sarrebourg rode off there also in pursuit of the scoundrel, so we went home again. Chauvel was waiting for me at the door, and said—

"I had gone to give information about that rascal to the authorities, and to have him arrested at once, but it was needless. The gold which he had been displaying to every one as he came along here, caused him to be followed from Blamont to Sarrebourg. He stole one of Franconi's best horses to make his escape upon; the sight of some gendarmes crossing the Place warned him of his danger. Franconi only fell in with him at Toul; he is a Royalist agent, a spy in fact."

I listened to all this with indignation; and then we went in to supper. Margaret was quite happy; Father

Chauvel regaled himself every moment with a good pinch of snuff, and cried—

“How pleasant it ~~must~~ be to have such an arm as Michel! How he dragged the bandit out of the room! I could see him hurried through the brushes and sugar-loaves, like a feather carried along by the wind.”

And we all laughed.

We had not, however, seen the last of it; for the next morning, about ten, just as we were very busy, my mother came in furious; she put her basket on the counter, and without paying any attention to the strangers who were there, nor the child which Margaret held in her arms, with her hair in disorder, and her eyes half out of her head, she began to shower all the abusive terms she could think of upon me, calling me Cain, Judas, Schinderhannes, prophesying I should be hanged, and that we should all be swept away like dirt in the street, and she leaned over the counter, and put her fist in my face. I looked at her calmly without replying, but the strangers in the shop said to her—

“Be silent! be silent! What you are now saying is a disgrace to you! He has said nothing to you! You ought to blush for yourself, you bad mother!”

Then she became angrier still, and began to attack them. These people naturally pushed her about. I hurried round to take her part, which put her in a still greater rage.

“Be off, Judas! I don’t want you. Let them beat me; go and inform against me as you did against your brother Nicolas!”

Her voice was heard so far that a crowd assembled, and all at once the guard arrived. When she saw the cocked hats and muskets at the door, she could not

· speak. I went out, and begged the officer in command of the picket not to take the poor old woman, who was half-crazy, into custody, but he would not listen to me, and Chauvel had only just time to get her away by our back door, which opened into the Rue des Capucins. The chief of the picket was absolutely determined to arrest somebody. I had to argue it over with him for a quarter of an hour, and at last give his men and himself a good allowance of spirits over the counter.

What a misfortune to have such a parent, who had neither the power of reflection nor common sense ! It is all very well to say a man is only responsible for his own conduct—he would rather go to prison himself than see his mother sent there, even when she a hundred times deserved it. Fortunately, neither my wife nor my father-in-law, nor any one belonging to me, ever mentioned the subject again. I deserved to be pitied ; and when we cannot change things, it is better to forget them.

This was my mother's first visit ; it was also the last ; God be thanked I shall have nothing more to say on that subject !

But all this shows you how far the Royalists thought they had progressed ; but a disagreeable surprise was in preparation for them : our turn to laugh was coming.

The only measure of the Five Hundred and the Ancients since the new elections of which Chauvel approved was their blaming the Directory for making peace or war without reference to the national representation ; and when Bonaparte, furious at the blame which recoiled upon him, wrote to Paris "that after having made peace five times, and given the last blow to the coalition, he thought he had a right to expect to

live quietly, if he did not receive a civic triumph ; that his reputation was the property of his country ; that he would not suffer the opprobrium with which the paid agents of England sought to cover him ; that he warned them the times were past when cowardly lawyers and miserable speechmakers sent soldiers to the guillotine ; and that the Army of Italy and its general could easily appear at the *Barrière de Olichy*—when Chauvel read that in the *Sentinelle Rouge*, he drew a red line round the article, and sent it to more than twenty patriots, writing above it—

“What do you think of that ?”

All our old friends came to the house, and we discussed the following question in our library :—

“Which would be better, to go to Cayenne if the Five Hundred, commanded by their president Pichegru, brought the king back, with his nobles and his bishops ; or to be preserved from that alternative by Bonaparte and his eighty thousand soldiers, who have but one notion of discipline ?”

It was a difficult question to answer.

Chauvel then said that in his opinion but one road to salvation remained for the Republic to follow ; if the bourgeois in the two councils, having their eyes opened by Bonaparte's letter, returned to a proper course of action, if they declared themselves against the Royalists and appealed to the people to re-establish liberty—in that case the people, having some one to lead them, would come forward ; the Directory would then be obliged to render an account of their proceedings, and the generals to lower their tone. But if the bourgeois persisted in endeavouring to stifle the Revolution, the people having only the choice between Louis XVIII. and

some victorious general, there were a thousand chances to one in favour of the general's remaining master, and of having the people on his side.

All those present agreed the Directory was not good for much; the Directors were thieves and plunderers, greedy of millions, without sense or shame, without courage to resist its own generals; but that it was a thousand times better than the two councils, infected as they were with Royalist voters; and that in such a case, if any break-out occurred, the patriots ought to declare for the Directory.

The town gates had been closed for some time when our little assembly separated, and I was not sorry that it did, for all the time we had been deliberating I dreaded hearing a tap on the shutter, and the police-officer Maingole, with his men, call out—

“Open in the name of the law!”

Happily nothing of the kind occurred, and we parted without noise, about one in the morning. This was in July, 1797. Some days after we read in the newspapers that Hoche, general-in-chief of the Sambre and Meuse army, was marching on Paris at the head of twenty-seven thousand men; that he had passed Mézières on the night of the 9th, and had traversed the department of the Marne by forced marches in spite of the observations of General Férino. The papers were full of the outcries which this proceeding forced from the Royalists and the two councils, of the explanations they exacted from the Directory, and threats against the armies and their generals if they came too near the capital.

The Five Hundred decreed, according to Pichegru's report, that the distance of six myriamètres prescribed by Article 69 of the Constitution should be measured as

the crow flies ; that in the decade which would follow the publication of this law, the executive Directory should put up a column with this inscription : " Constitutional limit for troops," on every road ; that Article 69 of the Constitution, and in addition, Articles 612, 620, 621, 622, and 639 of the Penal Code of the 3rd Brumaire, Year IV., should be engraved upon them ; that every commander-in-chief of an armed force, and every civil or military authority, or any constituted power whatever, having ordered his troops to overstep their limits, should be declared guilty of making an attempt upon public liberty, prosecuted and punished agreeably to Article 621 of the Code of Pains and Penalties.

It seems these outcries and this law frightened the Directory for a moment. Hoche received orders to withdraw his troops. He obeyed. But it had been seen that five or six forced marches might put the government into any general's hands. The fidelity of Hoche to his principles, and the weakness of the Directory, which was afraid of carrying out its own measures, alone retarded the explosion.

On the occasion of the fêtes of the 14th of July, the Army of Italy gave vent to loud threats against the Royalists, Augereau's division most especially. Augereau, the victor at Castiglione, a child of the Faubourg Antoine, openly declared for the Directory against the councils, and the Directory immediately appointed Augereau to the command of the 17th military division, which included Paris.

He arrived at the end of July. Every one talked about Augereau, his magnificent uniforms covered with gold embroidery down to his boots, and of the diamond aigrette in his hat. They must have had a fine cam-

paign down in Italy! Pichegru, who commanded the guard of the Five Hundred, was then nobody in comparison with Augereau, whom many preferred to Bonaparte for merit.

I do not think Pichegru had any great reliance on the military columns which had then been decreed. He would have preferred a command, rather than trust himself to the Articles 621 and 639.

Carnot, as a member of the Directory, whom we had always seen on the side of the law, obstinately supported the councils, in concert with Barthélemy, against the three other Directors. How often have the patriots, when they met at our house in the evening, pitied this honest man for finding himself surrounded by such a collection of rogues, and obliged to take the side of men he despised against others more contemptible still! He ought to have sent in his resignation.

Affairs dragged on thus during the months of July and August. The harvest of 1797 had not been bad; the vintages in Alsace were approaching, and a good quality of wine was expected; a calm seemed to have come over us. I remember at the time reading a speech of Bernadotte, who had been sent by Bonaparte to Paris, to present the last colours taken in Italy to the Council of Five Hundred. This is what he said:—

“Highest depositaries as you are of the laws, sure of the country’s constitutional respect and obedience, continue to excite Europe’s admiration, put down factions and the factious; finish the great work of peace; humanity requires it; it wishes no more blood should be shed.”

This Gascon, who had first put documents into the hands of the Directory which proved the Royalists

were planning its downfall, went on in the same style, saying the only wish of our armies was to devote themselves for the councils.

But five or six days later, numbers of couriers passed through Phalsbourg, shouting out, "Vive la République!" and distributing handfuls of proclamations on their road. We all picked them up, and took them home to read them. Elof came to our house, crying like a madman—

"They are down! The Republic is triumphant! Hurrah for the Republic one and indivisible!"

He held a proclamation in his hand, and began to read it in his loud voice in our shop. We all stood by and listened with astonishment. There was neither the enthusiasm of the Year I. nor of the Year II. We had seen too many things take place for anything to touch us very nearly. It was but surprise; and Margaret herself, with her child asleep on her shoulder, looked at me and smiled. Chauvel took a pinch of snuff with an attentive air, which seemed to say—

"Very good; I know how it all happened; the soldiers had the best of it."

Here you have the proclamation itself, which I found among some old papers. I will not copy the whole of it; so many proclamations become tiresome at last; they are all more or less alike:—

"The Executive Directory to the citizens of Paris.

*"This 18th Fructidor, Year V. of the Republic
one and indivisible. Two in the morning.*

"CITIZENS,—Royalty has just threatened the Constitution by a fresh attempt. After having shaken all the foundations of the Republic for the last year, it at

last believed itself sufficiently strong to ruin it entirely. A great number of émigrés, cut-throats from Lyons, and brigands from La Vendée, attracted hither by the tender interest which some persons were not afraid to testify, made an attack on the posts which surrounded the Executive Directory; but the vigilance of the government and of the chiefs of the armed force has rendered their criminal efforts abortive.

“The Executive Directory is about to put the authentic information it has collected with regard to the manœuvres of Royalty before the eyes of the nation. Citizens, you will shudder at the plot devised against the safety of all of you; against your property; against the rights you hold most dear; against your most sacred possessions; and you will be able to measure the extent of the calamities from which the maintenance of your present Constitution can alone preserve you.”

This proclamation, and all documents relating to the Royalist conspiracy, were attached to the doors of the club, the Town Hall, and the two gates of the town, by Christopher Steinbrenner, and the municipal officers, and also sent to every village.

This 18th Fructidor the Royalists fell for many years. We heard the next day that they had not moved, but that they had been attacked themselves, as it was well known they were making preparations for a struggle; that General Augereau, at the head of twelve thousand men, had surrounded the Tuileries the night of the 17th; that at three in the morning a cannon shot had given the signal for the attack; that the council's guard had offered no resistance; that the commission of in-

spectors, having summoned the councils for that same night, a great number of deputies and the colonel of the guard had been taken to the Temple prison; that a detachment of troops, charged with arresting Carnot and Barthélemy at the Luxembourg, had only found Barthélemy, and that it was supposed Carnot had made his escape; that as soon as it was morning, when the members arrived in procession at the Tuileries, the conspirators were seized; and all the other representatives, assembled at the School of Medicine and at the Odéon, had themselves tried their fellow-members and condemned them to transportation, to the number of fifty-three, as well as the editors, owners, and printers of a number of reactionary journals, and they had all been sent off at once to Cayenne, on board of government vessels.

Among those so transported were Boissy-d'Anglas, Pichegru, Barbé-Marbois, Aubry, and several others well known by the documents which had been found in the possession of Lemaître, which greatly rejoiced all the patriots.

I was very glad to hear Citizen Carnot had escaped. As for the rest, had I felt any pity for them, the papers posted up everywhere would soon have consoled me. At the very moment that Bernadotte was addressing his fine discourse to the council, the dissembler was well aware that a large number of Royalist deputies were betraying the nation, for he had arrived expressly from Italy to put the proofs of the conspiracy into the hands of the Directory. When Bonaparte occupied Venice he caused the British consul, and a certain D'Entraigues, who was one of the most dangerous agents of Louis XVIII., to be arrested.

Papers were discovered at the lodgings of this D'Entraigues written entirely in his own hand, and giving an account that Pichegru had allowed himself to be won over by a Count de Montgaillard, another Royalist agent, as cunning and skilful as all such men are. He said that the Prince de Condé, aware that Montgaillard kept up a correspondence in France, sent to Basle, in Switzerland, for him to come to Mülheim, in the month of August, 1795, and proposed to him to sound Pichegru, whose head-quarters were then at Altkirch. This commission was the more difficult, for there were four representatives of the people with the general, whose business it was to watch him closely, and in case of necessity. Nevertheless, Montgaillard, putting five or six hundred louis in his pocket, did not despair of success. He engaged as associate in his enterprise a man named Fauche-Borel, a printer at Neufchâtel, a fanatic in the Bourbon cause, full of zeal and enthusiasm, and a M. Courant, also a Neufchâtelois, formerly in the service of the great Frederick, and capable of doing anything for money. Montgaillard furnished them with ample instructions, passports, reasons for travelling in France, as foreigners, traders, buyers of national property, &c., and making his way back to Basle, he sent them off to try what they could do with Pichegru, on whose account he had been, no doubt, very well informed beforehand.

The best thing I can do is to give you a copy of the rest, for the Royalists have never protested against this statement, and besides, it is as well to see what opinion traitors have of themselves.

"The 13th of August, 1795," says Montgaillard, "Fauche and Courant set off for the head-quarters at

Altkirch; they remained there a week, seeing the general surrounded by representatives and generals, without having an opportunity of speaking to him. However, Pichegru remarked them, especially Fauche; and seeing him pertinaciously present wherever he was, he guessed that this man had something to say to him, so he said aloud one day as he passed him, 'I am going to Huningen.' Fauche starts directly for that place; Pichegru was already there with his four representatives. Fauche found means to get in his way at the end of a corridor. Pichegru noticed him, fixed his eye on him, and though it was pouring with rain, said aloud, 'I am going to dine with Madame Salomon.' The château was three leagues from Huningen, and this Madame Salomon is Pichegru's mistress. Fauche set off at once, reaches the village, goes to the château after dinner, and asks to see General Pichegru. The latter received him in a gallery, where he was taking coffee; Fauche tells him he is in possession of a manuscript by Jean-Jacques Rousseau, and he wishes to dedicate it to him. 'Very well,' says Pichegru, 'but I must read it first, for this Rousseau has professed opinions on liberty to which I should not like to put my name.' 'But,' says Fauche, 'I have something else to say to you.' 'What may that be, and from whom?' 'On the part of M. the Prince de Condé.' 'Be silent, and wait a moment.' Then he took him into a room in a retired part of the house, and there being alone together, he said, 'Explain yourself. What does Monseigneur the Prince de Condé want with me?' Fauche, who is rather perplexed, and who at the moment cannot find words to express himself, stammers and hesitates. 'Do not be afraid,'

says Pichegru to him, 'my opinions are those of the Prince de Condé. What does he wish me to do?' Fauche, having recovered his presence of mind, then says to him, 'M. the Prince de Condé wishes to be able to trust you; he reckons on you, and his wish is to join you.' 'All that is very vague and unsatisfactory,' says Pichegru; 'all that means nothing precise. Go back and bring me written instructions, and return in three days to my quarters at Altkirch; you will find me there alone at six in the evening.' Fauche immediately returns to Basle, comes to me, and in a transport of delight tells me all that has passed. I spent the night in writing a letter to General Pichegru.

"M. the Prince de Condé, endowed with full powers by Louis XVIII., except that of conferring the cordon bleu, or Cross of the Holy Ghost, had given the same powers under his hand and seal, to enable me to enter into negotiations with General Pichegru. In consequence I wrote to the general. I first of all said everything I could think of to arouse in him a feeling of proper pride, which is the instinct of great souls, and after pointing out to him all the good it was in his power to do, I spoke of his Majesty's gratitude for the good he would do his country by re-establishing the monarchy. I said the king would make him a Marshal of France, Governor of Alsace, since no one could govern the province better than he who had so valiantly defended it; that he should be made a knight of Saint-Louis; should have the château of Chambord and its park, with twelve guns taken from the Austrians; a million of francs paid down; two hundred thousand francs a year; an hôtel in Paris; the town of Arbois, the general's birthplace, should bear his name, and be

exempt from all taxes for fifteen years; the pension of two hundred thousand francs should be continued at his death, half to his wife, and the other half to his children, till failure of posterity."

Such were the offers made by the king to General Pichegru.

"With regard to his army, I offered in the king's name to confirm all his officers in their respective ranks, all those he recommended should be promoted, as also every commandant who should surrender his stronghold, and an exemption from taxation to every town which should open its gates. A full and unconditional amnesty for people of every degree.

"I added it was the Prince de Condé's desire that he should proclaim the King Louis XVIII. in his camp, put the town of Huningen into his hands, and join him in a march upon Paris.

"Pichegru having read this letter attentively, said to Fauche—'This is all very well, but who is this M. de Montgaillard who says he is thus authorised to write? I am not acquainted either with him or his signature. Is he the author of it?' 'Yes,' replied Fauche. 'But,' said Pichegru, 'it is my wish that the Prince de Condé, with whose writing I am very well acquainted, should confirm all that has been written here by M. de Montgaillard before I open myself any further. Go back, therefore, to M. de Montgaillard, and let him make the Prince de Condé aware of my reply.'

"Fauche returned to me immediately, leaving M. Courant with Pichegru. He arrived at Basle at nine in the evening, and gave me an account of his mission. I set off instantly to Mülheim, the Prince de Condé's head-quarters, which I reached at half-past twelve at

night. The prince had gone to bed; I desired his servant to awaken him; he made me sit down by him on the bed, and then our conference began. All I had to do was to make the prince acquainted with the negotiations as far as they had gone, and to induce him to write to General Pichegru a letter confirming the engagements entered into in his name. This negotiation, so plain in its object, so necessary, and so free from all obstacles, nevertheless occupied the whole of the night. M. the Prince, who is as brave as man can be, a worthy descendant of the great Condé for his cool intrepidity, in every other respect is the weakest of men—without capacity, without strength of mind, surrounded by most inferior and unworthy persons, some of them most corrupt, well knowing what they are, and yet allowing them to rule him," &c., &c.

Here Montgaillard dilates for three whole pages on the baseness, the cowardice, and the stupidity of the prince's friends, and then he goes on:—

"It required nine hours' hard work, sitting on his bed by his side, to induce him to write a letter of nine lines to General Pichegru. Sometimes he would not write it with his own hand, then he would not date it, then he refused to seal it with his coat of arms. He gave in at last, and wrote to him he might put full confidence in the letters the Count de Montgaillard had written in his name and by his instructions. When that was done, another difficulty was raised: the prince wished to have his letter returned to him. It was necessary to persuade him that if he wished to have it back he should not ask for it, that it should be returned after it had produced its intended effect. He gave way with reluctance.

“At last at daybreak I set out again for Basle, when I despatched Fauche to Altkirch, to General Pichegru. The general, opening the prince’s letter of nine lines, and recognising the handwriting and the signature, read it and returned it to Fauche immediately, remarking—

“‘I have seen the signature, and that is sufficient. The prince’s word is a pledge which ought to satisfy every Frenchman—take him back his letter.’

“Then we discussed the prince’s proposal. Pichegru opposed it.

“‘I will do nothing by halves,’ cried he; ‘I do not intend to be the third edition of Lafayette and Dumouriez; I know what my resources are, they are as vast as they are extensive; they have their roots, not only in my army, but in Paris, in the Convention, in the departments, and in the armies of those generals my colleagues who hold the same opinions as myself. I will have no half measures; we must make an end of it; France cannot exist as a Republic; she wants a king, she wants Louis XVIII. But we must not begin the counter-revolution until we are certain of acting surely and promptly—this is my plan. That of the prince is aimless; he would be driven from Huningen in four days, and I should be lost myself in a fortnight. My army is composed of brave fellows and rascals. I separate them, and give such assistance to the first by some great move, that there can be no possibility for them to draw back, but see that success is their only chance of safety. To arrive at this I propose to cross the Rhine at a point to be fixed by you, the day and the hour appointed, and with a number of men of all arms, also to be settled by you. Before that, I shall put safe and

right-thinking officers in command of the fortresses. I shall keep the rascals away, and post them in positions where they can do no harm, and where they will find it impossible to act together. This done, the moment I am on the other side of the Rhine I shall proclaim the king, hoist the white flag; the armies of Condé and the Emperor will join mine; I shall cross the Rhine again, and enter France. The fortresses will be surrendered and occupied in the king's name by imperialist troops. In conjunction with Condé's army I shall march forward immediately; all our resources will then come into play; we shall march upon Paris and be there in a fortnight. But you know that with the French soldier the way to Royalty is down his throat. When you cry "Vive le roi!" you must give him wine and put a crown in his hand. My army must be paid until it has made four or five marches in French territory. Go and carry all this to the prince as I have written it, and bring me his reply.' "

Here I stop—I have surely said enough about this traitor. You see, my poor comrade Sôme had unluckily found himself with our battery in the number of those whom Pichegru called rascals, and whom he intended to put in such a position that they could not act together. Ten thousand of them lost their lives! . . . How Sôme would look, and how he would grind his teeth, if he could read the explanation of this infamy!

With us, where so many thousands of men came and died, people trembled with rage, they said transportation was not sufficient punishment for such villains; for these documents which had been sent from Italy were not the only ones which were so published. Others referring to the conspiracy of Duverne, Brottier, and

Lavilleurnois, printed by order of the Directory; Duverne's confessions and some letters found in a baggage-waggon belonging to the Austrian general Klinglin, at the last passage of the Rhine, and printed and circulated by thousands, proved to us that the Royalist conspiracy had spread all over France, and that the chief conspirators were to be found in the legislative body.

Barras, Rewbell, and Lareveillière were then considered the saviours of the Republic. Transportation, the enforcement of the laws against priests and émigrés, and the exclusion of their relatives from all public employments, the suspension of the liberty of the press, and of the organisation of the National Guard—all these measures appeared just and necessary; even the dismissal of Moreau, who had not forwarded Klinglin's papers to the Directory until the 22nd Fructidor. He was suspected of having waited for the result of the battle that he might declare for whoever won; Hoche was put in his place; he was general-in-chief of the two armies of the Rhine; no one thought of protesting against it.

The Royalists, who had transported so many patriots and Montagnards since the 9th Thermidor, exclaimed lustily, and uttered endless lamentations about the sufferings of their friends at Sinnamarie, about the want of food, the great heat, and the diseases they had gone through at Cayenne. It is horrible, there can be no doubt of it, but we are not to believe them more susceptible nor *better* than other men, and we must recollect that the Supreme Being has created blood-sucking flies as much for Royalists as Republicans. If they had abolished transportation when they were in

power, we could not have sent them there ; we should have been satisfied to keep them in prison or to exile them. It comes back to saying, "Do not to others what you would not they should do to you."

To return to the 18th Fructidor, the two directors, Carnot and Barthélemy, were replaced by Merlin (of Douai) and François, of Neufchâteau. The Jacobins thought they had gained the day, but the battle soon began again in the clubs between them and the Constitutionalists. These Constitutionalists, who called themselves Republicans, only wanted the Constitution of the Year III. ; the Directory was forced to support these egotists, for had it not been for the Constitution of the Year III. it would not have been in existence.

Thenceforward true Republicans distrusted the Directory, notwithstanding all it did to exterminate the Royalists, in spite of military commissions which shot the émigrés who had delayed their departure, and the transportation of priests who had refused the oath to the Republic, which still continued. No one dared to make a remark, for the Directory had long arms. Chauvel himself was cautious ; he read everything and kept quiet. I was in hopes he was becoming more reasonable, which pleased me much, but I was far out in my reckoning, for Chauvel hated the Directory worse than any other form of government on account of the faculty it had assumed of appointing and removing judges, mayors, and magistrates of every description belonging to the fifty-three departments, of which a part of the deputies had been transported, of suppressing newspapers, dissolving clubs, delaying the organisation of the National Guard, and of proclaiming the state of siege. One day he said to me—

“What are we become under such a government? what is the nation now? Even if the five directors were every man a Danton, if they had all the good sense, all the courage and patriotism in which they are deficient, even then, holding the power they do, I should consider them a scourge. They are real despots! Our only safety is in their folly and their cowardice. But let some general turn them out and quietly take possession of their place, with hardly any change in their authority, and we are all slaves.

“At this very moment we are obliged to be silent, for if these citizens give but a sign we may be arrested, tried, and transported, and our property confiscated for ever. Where are our guarantees? I see none. They have the executive power in their hands, and the two councils have only the right of expressing their wishes, as had the provincial assemblies under Louis XVI.”

What irritated Chauvel the most was the cowardice of the Directory respecting General Bonaparte, whose resignation it dared not accept, and whom it would rather see in Italy making and unmaking, aggrandising, dividing, and creating a number of small republics, rather than recall him to Paris to give an account of his doings. Since the Léoben preliminaries, all the newspapers were full of Bonaparte. “Proclamation of Bonaparte, General-in-Chief of the Army of Italy, to the citizens of the 8th Military Division.” “Bonaparte at headquarters at Passeriano.” “Joseph Bonaparte, minister of the French Republic, presented to the Pope.” “Details of the reception by his holiness of the French ambassador, Joseph Bonaparte.” “General Bonaparte has taken steps to organise the territory of the Cis-

alpine Republic." "General Bonaparte has done this—General Bonaparte has done that."

One would have said that the Bonapartes constituted the whole of France. The death of Hoche; the appointment of Augereau in his place; the rupture of negotiations with England, who wanted peace but wanted to keep our colonies too; the perplexity of the Directory and the disputés in the councils—everything was of secondary importance. Bonaparte always filled the newspapers! There was a man who well knew what it was to advertise! With his solitary Italian campaign he made more stir than all our other generals together, with their campaigns of the North, the South, of Germany, Champagne, Vendée, and Holland, since the beginning of the Revolution. Their only topic was the peace which General Bonaparte was to make; of the Marquis de Gallo, Knight of the Order of Saint Januarius; of Louis de Cobentzel, Count of the Holy Roman Empire; of M. Ignace, Baron de Dégelmann, and the other plenipotentiaries instructed to treat with General Bonaparte.

Of course after so many battles, so much suffering and misery, everybody longed for peace. Peasants, workmen, bourgeois—all wanted to live quietly with their wives and children—to work, to sow, to reap, to buy and sell, without having to fear the return of the Austrians, or the Vendéans, or the English, or the Spaniards. That is true! But when we read what has since been related, one would believe it was all Bonaparte's doing, and that he had implanted the love of peace in men's hearts; which is not common sense. Had Bonaparte never existed the nation would not have wished for peace the less; nor would she have

had less chance of obtaining it. For we had ravaged, massacred, and burnt other countries much more than they had burnt, massacred, and ravaged us. We all had enough of it; and nations would have concluded peace without the intervention of kings, princes, and directors—peace would have been made of itself.

At last this famous treaty with the Emperor, King of Hungary and Bohemia, arrived.

For retaining the left bank of the Rhine, which we had won before Bonaparte came, and which we then occupied, General Bonaparte ceded Istria, Dalmatia, Friuli, the *ci-devant* isle of Venice, in the Adriatic, the city of Venice, the Lagunes—in fact, the whole Republic of Venice, which was not ours to give—to his Majesty the Emperor of Austria, King of Bohemia and Hungary, in full sovereignty.

The Austrians, who were a hundred leagues distant from Belgium, ought to be satisfied; there was not much to boast about in this treaty, for Austria would have accepted the bargain before the war in Italy and all her lost battles.

This is what every one was so pleased at!

The King of Bohemia and Hungary also ceded the Ionian Islands to us, which were ours already. People must be more stupid than the dullest peasant, for they don't consider those who ruin themselves in law expenses as being very clever. Lawyers grow rich at fools' expense, and generals at the expense of popular folly.

All the same, this famous treaty of Campo-Formio was the foundation of Bonaparte's glory.

What I say to you now, all men of sense thought and said among themselves; but the people, the masses

who know nothing and understand nothing, were enthusiastic in its praise; they gave all the glory of this peace to Bonaparte; they forgot how many times we had beaten the Germans in the last four years; Bonaparte had done everything!

Now you shall see the rest, for this story will never come to an end—there is always something more.

Then we read articles like the following in the gazettes:—"Milan, 26 Brumaire.—General Bonaparte left Milan yesterday morning, to preside over the French Legation at the Congress of Rastadt." "Mantua, 6 November.—The passage of General Bonaparte through this city has been marked by circumstances worthy of notice. He was lodged in the palaces of the former dukes. The municipality and public functionaries in full dress went to compliment him." Or, in another place, "The journey of General Bonaparte through Switzerland has been a great event in this country, where for some time we have been very uneasy about threats of an invasion. Bonaparte, by the friendly disposition he showed to the Bernese deputies, seems to have reassured our population. We put our trust in his frankness and his generosity." "Bonaparte reached Geneva the 21st and dined with the French resident. For several days he has been expected by every road—at last his couriers announced his arrival." "General Bonaparte's carriage broke down this morning near Avenche; he got down, and we saw him arrive on foot with some officers and an escort of dragoons. He stopped near the ossuary. A bourgeois of Morat, about five feet seven inches high, looked at the general with astonishment. 'He is a very little man to be such a great general,' he cried

‘It is just the height of Alexander the Great,’ I remarked, an observation which made the aide-de-camp smile. The same honours have been rendered to Bonaparte all over Switzerland; Lausanne was illuminated when he arrived.” “Bonaparte dined at the little town of Rolle yesterday. The cannon on the ramparts announced his entry into Basle. The fortress of Huningen and the surrounding redoubts repeated the salute,” &c., &c.

At Paris in the Five Hundred there was a still greater display—there enthusiasm opened the mouths of Bonaparte’s admirers to their ears. “At last we have won a peace both honourable and certain. It will open the sources and channels of public prosperity; it will give the tree of liberty nourishing sap which will load it with the sweetest fruit; it will heal the wounds which war’s long disasters have spread over the body politic; at last we shall be able to relieve the poor, protect arts and industry, give commerce a freer scope, and the State’s creditors, whose misfortunes have often caused us to shed tears of sympathy, will no longer be the first orphans of the country.”

What can I add to this? They threw themselves at the feet of this soldier, and he seemed to honour you by treading upon you. Men’s meanness is something incredible; and if heroes like Bonaparte end by looking upon men as animals to be led to the slaughter, we ought not be astonished; they themselves are the cause of it; those who have no respect for themselves only deserve contempt.

It seems Bonaparte himself at last got tired of these ovations, or, as Chauvel called them, platitudes, for at a time when all Alsace, from Huningen to Saverne, was

putting up triumphal arches, and round about us people from Mittelbronn, Saint-Jean-des-Choux, Quatre-Vents, and Baraques, from hill and dale, were bringing in branches of fir, the only green thing they could find in these snowy days, the gazettes informed us that General Bonaparte, after having seen his maternal great-uncle, M. Jarche, and embraced him in the great hall, where the Estates of Basle gave him a magnificent repast, had set off again to the sound of the cannon, which were thundering on the ramparts; that he had taken the road on the right bank, and ought to be at that moment at Rastadt, a walled town of the Grand Duchy of Baden, where the congress for a general peace was holding its sittings. The triumphal arch was already erected on the Place at Phalsbourg, and people went home in despair through the dirt and rain.

Maître Jean, my father, and Létumier, being wet through, came and dried themselves in our library. They dared not grumble. Maître Jean said there was no doubt Bonaparte would pass through the town when the congress was over, that they would see him then, and that the timber of the triumphal arch could be made use of again.

Margaret fetched a bottle of wine, glasses, some apples, and a basket of nuts, which she set on the table; and while they were drying themselves and cracking their nuts, more patriots, Elob Collin, Raphaël Manque, and Denis Thévenot, came in; they were all in despair, especially Elob, who intended to have made a grand speech to Citizen Bonaparte. Chauvel, holding his head down behind the stove, listened to what they said, and suddenly began to laugh so loudly that he astonished us all.

"What are you laughing at, Chauvel?" said Maître Jean.

"Yes," said he; "I laugh when I think I see Citizen Bonaparte in his ambassador's carriage, lined with silk and velvet, galloping on the road to Rastadt, and saying to himself, as he takes a good pinch of snuff—'All goes well! Jacobins, Royalists, Constitutionalists, all that collection of fools who are led by the nose by two or three clever rogues, are in the net. It is now three years ago at Oneille, Orméa, and Saorgio, when I waited from morning till night at the door of the representative Augustin-Bon-Joseph Robespierre, and I cultivated the rights of man—who would ever have prophesied such a future for me? Before Vendémiaire, Bonaparte, you were still obliged to bow at the door of Citizen Barras to obtain an audience. The director received you well or ill, according to how he had dined. The servants, when they saw you return to the charge, smiled behind your back; they winked at one another, 'Here he is again,' and you said to yourself, 'Courage, Bonaparte, courage; bend your back before this creature of rottenness; Corsican, humble your pride; it is the road to fortune.' And now you are on the road to Rastadt, with couriers before you and victories in your rear, and bulletins your skirmishers. Jacobins, Constitutionalists, and Royalists sing your praises; from you they expect, some liberty, others their king, others their Constitution.'"

Chauvel then laughed louder than before; and when Eloi Collin asserted that Bonaparte was a true Jacobin, and that all his proclamations proved it, and that men ought not to be accused without proofs, Chauvel, whose eyes flashed fire, replied—

“The proof is this man’s insolence after his humility. Since his victories in Italy, where every skirmish has been celebrated as a battle, he has never ceased to assume a lofty tone, to offer to retire whenever any observation has been made, to forbid his adversaries to speak, and to threaten even in Paris itself—to give himself credit for all successes at home and abroad, and to take advantage most disgracefully of the cowardice of the Directory, of their vices and their meanness. What we have never seen before, he has won them over by the money he has sent them; in all his letters he only talks of the millions he is going to take here and there. Before his advent was our Republic sullied in such a way? Did we not cut off Custine’s head for having put the Palatinate to ransom? Did we then wage war for the sake of robbing peoples of their money, their goods, and everything they cared to keep as a memorial of their former power and of their liberty? What better proof can we have of this general’s disposition than his own conduct? What other would have given whole cities up to pillage as he did Pavia and Verona? Is not that an eternal stain on French honour? And when these soldiers return, how can they entertain in future any respect for persons, families, or property?—they who, from the first day they marched under his command, have heard their general cry, ‘I lead you into the most fertile plains in the world—there you will find honour, glory, and riches!’ Now it is thus our Republic first showed herself to surrounding nations: it was to give them their rights, and not to rob them of their property. In Italy we have carried on a war of banditti; and I say it with pain, the bandits of down there and

their chief are coming to practise on us what they have learned in Italy—contempt for the human race. The crowd which casts itself at the feet of this hero deprives him of the little respect he might still retain for the people. After millions from Italy he will want other millions from us. Instead of earning these millions by economy and industry, we shall seek them in a war of rapine. Then Bonaparte will become our master. He will have bought us cheaply, with all the treasure he has stolen from Europe; and we shall be in his power. Who can protest against it?"

Chauvel's indignation burst on us like the sound of a trumpet. The people in the shop were listening; he might have been heard in the street. At this time it was already dangerous to attack Bonaparte; for our cowardly Directory, which always yielded to him, could refuse him nothing—he could have had any one arrested. The patriots present went away one after the other; the last were very well pleased to see our supper on the table.

"Come," said Maître Jean, "good appetite to you. It is growing late—they will be waiting for me at home."

They went away, and Chauvel said gloomily—

"Let us sit and have our supper."

Not another word of politics was spoken that evening. But I have not forgotten these things. They show that Chauvel knew Bonaparte well—that he had long ago seen through him; and what was not slow in taking place clearly proved to every one that he was not mistaken.



CHAPTER XI.



SOME days afterwards we heard that Bonaparte had quited the congress at Rastadt, where the plenipotentiaries could not agree about anything, and that he was in Paris. We read at the beginning of the papers—

*“ République Française,
“ 16 Frimaire.*

“ General Bonaparte has arrived in Paris, about five in the evening. He will have his solemn audience of the Executive Directory next decade in the court of the Luxembourg, which is being decorated for that purpose. Dinner will be laid for eighty guests,” &c., &c.

And again the next day—

“ The general left his carriage, and took up his quarters at the house of his wife, Rue Chantereine, Chaussée d’Antin. This house is simple, small, and without luxury.”

Again—

“ The administrators of the Department of the Seine having announced their intention to pay a visit

to General Bonaparte, he went himself to the department, accompanied by General Berthier. The *ex-Conventional* Mathieu saluted him; the general returned it with dignity and modesty.

"The Court of Cassation has sent a deputation of several of its members to Bonaparte; they were received with respect.

"The magistrate of the *arrondissement* went to pay his respects to General Bonaparte; the general has returned his visit.

"Bonaparte rarely goes out; when he does it is in a plain carriage and pair."

And so on again and again.

One day we were told that Bonaparte had dined with François de Neufchâteau, that he had astonished every one by discussing mathematics with Lagrange and Laplace, metaphysics with Sicyès, poetry with Chénier, politics with Galois, legislation and public law with Daunou, and, what was most surprising, he knew more about it than all of them together.

The next day Bonaparte returned the visit of the Court of Cassation. He arrived there at eleven, attended by a single aide-de-camp. All the judges assembled in their robes, and received him in the council-chamber. He knew more than they did about the laws of the country.

Then came the grand reception at the Luxembourg. Discharges of cannon opened the fête. The procession of commissioners of police, of the courts of justice, of the twelve municipal administrations, of the central administration of the department, and of fifty other administrations, proceeded to meet and escort him; commissioners of the treasury, of public accounts, civil

and criminal tribunals, of the national institute of arts and sciences, staff officers, and what more I forget. The bands played Republican airs.

And then the description of the march of the cortége, of the road it took, of its arrival, of the altar in a semicircle in the vast amphitheatre, of the standards and trophies, of the cries of enthusiasm, of the speeches of the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Talleyrand-Périgord, ci-devant bishop of Autun, member of the Constituent Assembly, who had once performed mass in the Champ de Mars, and consecrated the bishops who took the oath, in spite of the Pope—an unscrupulous rogue! Then came the speech of Barras, who spoke of Cato and Socrates, and other ancient patriots who served him for models, Bonaparte's reply, warlike hymns, &c., &c.

Poor devils from Mayence! poor generals of the Army of the North, of the Sambre and the Meuse, of the Rhine and the Moselle, of the Pyrenees, of La Vendée, of everywhere, how many actions, how many battles did you fight in '92, '93, '94, '95 under much more serious and more terribly dangerous circumstances than those fought in Italy! But, nevertheless, it was you, yes, and all of us, who might boast of having saved the country several times by having saved it through the greatest sufferings, without coats, without shoes, almost without bread, and not one among us, not one of our leaders, brave, steadfast, and honest as they were, ever received a thousandth part of the honours bestowed upon Bonaparte. The country had no worship, no enthusiasm, but for that one man. It is not enough to do one's duty, the great affair is to call out, and to make a hundred gazettes call out—"I have done this! I have done that! I said so and so!

I am such a one ! I am the clever man ! It is I who send you colours, millions, pictures, &c. !” And then a list is made out of what has been sent of guns and trophies ; and then again to repeat to one’s soldiers, “ You are the finest soldiers in the world !” which of course makes men add mentally, “ And you the greatest general.” Ah, what a comedy it all is !—the big drum, the fifes, gold lace and plumes, fine means to catch Frenchmen.

Chauvel was quite right in saying, when he read all this—

“ Poor, poor people ! of all others the most naturally inclined to justice. Well, when this farce is acted before it, its head is turned, and can no longer see whither they are leading it. Robespierre, with his solemn mien and big words about virtue, and this man with his self-glorification, are two of the greatest comedians I ever met. God grant they may not cost us too dear !”

Chauvel reckoned on Kléber, Augereau, Bernadotte, and Jourdan to save the Republic. He was in despair at the death of Hoche ; and he often used to repeat the fine address to his men of the pacifier of La Vendée—

“ My friends, you must not yet lay down those terrible arms with which you have determined victory so often. Perfidious enemies, without thinking of you, are endeavouring to bring France back to the state of slavery from which you have freed her for ever. Fana-ticism, intrigue, corruption, disorder in the finances, the degradation of Republican institutions, and of the men who have rendered us the greatest services—these are the weapons they make use of to arrive at a social dissolution, which they say is the effect of circum-

stances. We will oppose them with loyalty, courage, disinterestedness, and love of those virtues the names only of which they are acquainted with, and they will be overcome."

Yes; but at this hour Hoche slept in peace by the side of his friend Marceau in a little fort near Coblentz; and disinterestedness, love of virtue, and loyalty, cannot raise the dead.

So the men from Italy reaped all the honours and profit from our Revolution. The peace which the nation valued so highly was the result of our Rhenish campaigns much more than of those of Italy. The people all the same gave all the glory of it to Bonaparte; and dearly has it paid for its injustice!

The winter passed amidst fêtes and dinners given to the glorification of one man. Augereau, who was disgusted at finding himself left in the shade, remonstrated so loudly that the command of the Army of Germany was taken from him, and he was sent to command at Perpignan. Berthier received the command of the Army of Italy; and Bonaparte caused himself to be named member of the Institute instead of his former friend Carnot, who two years previously had approved of his plans of campaign when he was nobody, and went about knocking at the doors of all who could in any way assist him to become somebody.

Everybody was talking at that time about a grand expedition to England, of which Bonaparte was to be commander-in-chief. But to equip vessels for this expedition, and collect the necessary stores and ammunition, much money was wanted. It was said that the Bernese in Switzerland had a considerable treasure. They were called "Les Messieurs de Berne." They

had done us no harm, these Messieurs, but the citizens of the Canton de Vaud complained of being subject to their rule, of cultivating their land, and of paying taxes to them.

These Vaudois citizens may have been in the right, but their affairs were no business of ours; and had it not been for the treasure of the Bernese Messieurs, I believe the Directory would have taken no steps in the matter. But unfortunately money was wanted for the expedition to England, and this treasure offered great attractions to Barras, Rewbell, and the other Directors. Italian millions had whetted their appetite. It was a serious business.

In the month of January the 75th Demi-Brigade, under the orders of General Rampon, crossed the Lake of Geneva to take up its quarters at Lausanne. General Ménard followed it with an entire division, and the gazettes soon informed us that his proclamations had produced a good effect.

"Brave soldiers! Liberty—whose apostles you are—invites you into the Canton de Vaud. The French Republic desires that the Vaudois, who have shaken off the yoke of their oppressors, should be free," &c., &c.

All Switzerland was up. The Messieurs of Berne, Fribourg, and Soleure, who had no doubt that their crowns were in danger, instead of renouncing their ancient privileges over the cantons, marched their troops against us. Basle, Lucerne, and Zurich had more sense—they granted their subjects all they asked for. But this did not suit the views of the Directory. What they wanted—as was said at Paris, at least—was a Republic one and indivisible like our own, without independent cantons. General Rampon, who was a Frenchman,

for his brilliant actions in Italy, replaced Ménard in the command, and began his march. The Directory's commissaries, "réquisitionneurs," purveyors filed through our town, and masses of troops. It quite stirred up the country, and business had never been so good. The Swiss defended themselves valiantly, particularly the insurgents of the smaller cantons, all good marksmen and well acquainted with the country. But as we entered it on two sides at once, by Basle and by Geneva, the treasure was in greater danger every day.

I cannot stop to tell you all about actions, and skirmishes, and surprises in the papers, of which we heard daily from thence. General Nicolas Jordy, our old commandant at Mayence, performed several brilliant actions; he took guns, colours, and quantities of prisoners.

Notwithstanding this war's atrocious injustice, I could not help being pleased at hearing our old soldiers were distinguishing themselves.

At last Soleure and Berne capitulated, the Directory gained its object; convoys without end rolled along the road to Paris. They even brought with them the bears from Berne, and it is from that time we talk about Martin the bear in the Jardin des Plantes; the whole family of bears passed through our town in five large cases, with numbers of other vehicles also loaded with cases, but which I believe had no bears inside them. They were said to be sent by Citizen Rapinat, brother-in-law of our Director Rewbell.

These events happened in February and March, 1798. We had heard some time before that of the assassination of General Duphot at Rome, close to the palace of our ambassador, Joseph Bonaparte. The Pope was rich! Berthier marched upon Rome; it was under

stood the expedition to England would soon be in want of nothing, the fleet would be a magnificent one, and the troops would have abundance of everything.

But I must not forget the joy we felt in seeing my sister Lisbeth and her little Cassius again. Marescot was at that time captain in the 51st Demi-Brigade, with which the old 13th Light Infantry had been embodied, the 11th Prairial, Year IV. He was still in Italy, but a battalion of the 51st having been detached to reinforce the army in Bâtavia, Lisbeth profited by the occasion to come and show us her laurels.

One morning as I was arranging the front of my shop with brushes, scythes, great rolls of flannel and cotton—for we had begun to deal in stuffs as well as haberdashery and grocery—while I was thus employed, as I chanced to look on one side of the Place, I saw a fine lady bedizened with ornaments and covered with furbelows coming down the Rue du Cœur-Rouge, holding a little boy, dressed as a hussar, by the hand. Many people were looking out of window, and I wondered to myself who that fine lady could possibly be, with her earrings, her rings, and her gold chain; I fancied I had seen her somewhere. She walked along giving herself all the airs imaginable, but when she got to the corner of the market she set off running, stretched her long legs, and began calling out—

“Here I am, Michel!”

Then I recollected Mayence, the retreat from Entrames, and the rest of it, and I was quite amazed. Lisbeth was already in my arms, and I was so astonished I could not speak; I never could have believed I was so fond of Lisbeth and her little Cassius.

Margaret came up, and then Chauvel. Lisbeth said to Cassius—

“Kiss him—it’s your uncle, Cassius! Ah, Michel, do you remember the day we were bombarded? He was not as big as he is now, was he? And the retreat from Laval!”

She embraced Margaret, and then Chauvel, who seemed in a very good humour.

The little curly-headed boy, just like his father, looked wonderingly in my face, his little arm resting on my shoulder. We passed through the shop laughing and talking like very happy people. Once in the library, Lisbeth, whose bonnet and shawl were in the way, threw them on a chair, and began to laugh, and said—

“I have five large cases full of baubles and gewgaws like those at the Auberge de Bâle; rings, chains, earrings! I have brought them to vex the women here—but for myself I don’t care about them; a good handkerchief round my head, and a warm petticoat, are all I want in winter. I forgot—I must have my little glass of brandy.”

When she saw Stephen, who had been at work behind the shop, come in, she began crying with pleasure. She was a good creature, I could see she was, and I was glad to see she was not the least like Nicolas.

Stephen wanted to go and fetch his father and mother at once; but Lisbeth said she would go to Baraques herself after dinner. She called for my children and kissed them, and said of Jean-Pierre—

“That one is Citizen Chauvel—I should have known him among a thousand, and this one I think is Aunt Lisbeth, for she is strong, tall, and light-haired—the little darlings!”

This talk delighted us. Afterwards we went back to the library; and as her visit was already known in town, and many friends and acquaintances came to see us, every time a patriot entered, young or old, Lisbeth began with the greatest familiarity—

“Why, there is Collin! How are you, Collin? and Father Raphaël, too!”

Of course this rather surprised them, but seeing how grand she looked, they all thought she had a sort of right to be free and easy with them. The dinner, during which we drank several bottles of good wine, passed off very gaily. Lisbeth gave us an account of her spoils at Pavia, Plaisance, Milan, Verona, and Venice. She burst out laughing as she described the faces of those who were plundered, and when Chauvel said—

“Why, Citoyenne Lisbeth, you carried on a war of banditti there”—

“Nonsense,” said she, “why they were all aristocrats and priests. Ought one to have any scruples about pillaging them? They detested us all, the rascals! Every moment they rose in our rear. Ah, the wretches! We shot numbers of monks and capuchins: no sooner taken than shot. That was Bonaparte’s only method. No useless reflections: you have been taken prisoner with rebels, your affair is very clear, a squad of eight men, a wall in a field, and adieu. That soon stopped their inclination for war, Citizen Chauvel!”

“Yes, yes, he went roundly to work.”

“I think he did,” said Lisbeth, laughing; “and then you see” (here she pretended to take things and thrust them into her pockets) “I wore pockets which hung down to my heels. Sometimes Marescot would seem

angry, and cry out, 'You shocking plunderer, I will have you shot at the head of the company as an example!' but every one would laugh; and he generally ended by laughing too. Should we not have been silly to wait till the fourgons belonging to generals, and colonels, and commissioners came to carry off everything? Did we not risk our lives as well as they?"

"Doubtless," said Chauvel, "but the public treasury——"

"The public treasury? Ah, what a joke! The public treasury is the 'réquisitionneurs' pocket. Besides that, standards, chefs-d'œuvre of art, and millions and millions were sent to the Directory; that was the share of the commander-in-chief. Have you seen the lists?"

"Yes, we have seen them."

"Well, then, did the Mayence, Belgian, or Dutch war produce a quarter as much?"

After having had her dinner and her little glass of brandy, Lisbeth collected her finery and set off with Stephen and Cassius for Baraques. We watched them go away, and then Chauvel said——

"What a plundering baggage! My poor Michel, you may well say you have a curious family!"

He laughed while he spoke, for Lisbeth told us about her spoils so naturally that one could see it seemed as simple a thing to her as drinking a glass of brandy. She was proud of it! and what was more extraordinary still, all the town ladies, who knew very well that she was the daughter of old Bastien of Baraques, and who remembered perfectly well that she used to beg along the high road, with hardly any clothes on her back, and without shoes and stockings—they were all admiring her dress, her bonnet, her rings, and her air of distinc-

tion. During the week she stayed with us she changed her toilette twice a day, sometimes wearing a silk dress, sometimes a velvet one, with new trimmings "*à l'Italienne*;" some of these dresses were as stiff as pasteboard, from the embroidery on them; she must have ransacked the chapel of some female saint, or some old château, where they kept the gala robes of former popes. Who can say?

Several ladies of the most importance in Phalsbourg used to call out as she passed—

"Look at her! look at her! Oh the wretch, how well she is dressed!"

And they were not ashamed to send their servants to the Auberge de Bâle to borrow such a furbelow or such a headdress of Marescot, to have the latest patterns in fashion in the great world. Lisbeth had invitations from M. the mayor, and madame, wife of the commandant de place—in fact, we gave her much the same sort of reception as the Parisians did to Bonaparte.

How few people have sufficient self-respect not to bend to those who have been successful! I used to blush for them. But what amused us at home was to hear Lisbeth turn them into ridicule. When she told us about these grand receptions she used to shrug her shoulders.

"It is the same story everywhere," she used to say; "when I am in my slippers, and a red handkerchief round my head, and my petticoats on in the morning, the men said, '*There's the ex-cantinière of the 13th Light Infantry*;' when I am in full dress I am madame the captain's wife; I might pass for a *ci-devant*. But I am just as wise in the morning as I am in the

evening. What fools men are! They always want to have dust thrown in their eyes."

My father dined with us every day with Lisbeth, little Cassius sitting on his knee. The poor old man had never been so delighted; every moment, with tears in his eyes, he repeated—

"The Lord has blessed my children. When I was so miserable I never thought such changes possible."

He looked at his daughter with admiration and wonder; he thought everything she said was right, and he often used to say—

"If your grandmother Anne and your grandfather Mathurin could see you, they would think you belonged to the lords of Dagsbourg."

"Yes, Father Bastien," Chauvel would reply, holding out his snuff-box, and smiling good-humouredly; "we owe all that to the Revolution; it has got above its level everywhere, and broken down all barriers. But let us hope that the serfs of yesterday will not become the masters of to-morrow. Let those who are down try to defend themselves—that is their affair; we have done our duty."

My mother would never come to my house again; so she went to see Lisbeth at the Ville de Bâle, to look at her treasures; she would lift up her hands, and say—

"The blessing of the Lord be upon you! Give me this, give me that!"

But Lisbeth, who knew she only wanted it to offer to the black Madonna of Saint-Witt, only gave her some old finery, and told us of it in the evening.

"If I listened to her, all the booty of the campaign would soon find its way again into the hands of priests and monks."

At last she set off back again. It was just about the time Berthier entered Rome. Marescot was there; he had written to her; Lisbeth regretted having left the brigade; she wanted to get back as quickly as possible, pretending she wished to have Cassius blessed by the Pope. She had promised to send relics to all the ladies in Phalsbourg; and some bits of the true cross to my mother and Dame Catherine, or some bones of male or female saints; for these things had come into fashion again.

The evening before she left, she took me and Margaret to her hôtel, and made me accept a large repeating watch, which I have still, and which keeps good time now. It was a magnificent piece of work; a small coronet was engraved on the back of it, and it struck the hours quite slowly, like a cathedral clock—I have never had any other. As I made some difficulty about accepting it, Lisbeth said—

“Marescot sends it to you in remembrance of the retreat from Entrames, where you saved our lives.”

She embraced me tenderly, and putting little Cassius in my arms, she cried—

“You ought* to accept it for his sake, Michel. Marescot said to me, ‘There, that is for your brother; I won it at the point of my sword. It does not come from a miserable handful of gold given to the watch-maker at the corner, but from the field of battle; it has been paid for in blood. Tell him that, Lisbeth, and let him kiss the boy.’” So I took the watch and put it in my pocket. These words flattered my vanity; you see one has not been a soldier for nothing.

She obliged Margaret to choose what she liked best among her rings. Margaret looked at me; I made her

a sign in assent, not to vex my sister. So she chose a very small one, with a single small pearl in it, which glistened like a tear, but she never wore it after Lisbeth left, for she did not know whether it might not have belonged to some young girl, or young wife, killed while some town was pillaged. I suspected this was the case, and I never made any observation to her about it.

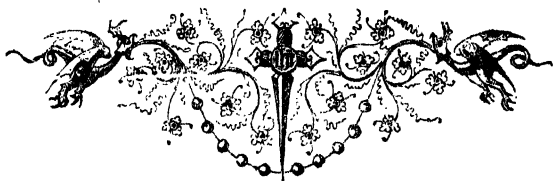
Lisbeth also gave me a hundred francs for my father, advising me not to give anything to my mother, for she would be sure to take it immediately to the refractory priest at Henridorff.

The last day, at five, as we were all assembled in the library, with Maître Jean, Létumier, and other friends, all the boxes being on the coach, Baptiste came to tell us the courier was waiting. Kisses, promises to see one another again, and good wishes followed my sister and Cassius to the carriage, which took them up at my door, in the midst of a crowd of inquisitive lookers-on. Several ladies and their husbands were of the number. Salutes were exchanged, the last compliment passed, and Lisbeth and Cassius called out---

“Adieu, Michel! Adieu, Margaret! Adieu to every one!”

My father still held his daughter's hand; she leant out to kiss him, and gave him the child to kiss, and then the coach began to roll towards the Place d'Armes. Many years were to pass before we saw one another again, and for more than one it was a final parting.





CHAPTER XII.



PRIL was close at hand, and every day we expected to read in the papers that the expedition to England had started. We could want nothing now; the plunder of Berne alone had supplied the Directory with more than twenty-five millions, either in bar gold and silver, or in guns, ammunition, and stores of every description.

Doctor Schwân, of Strasbourg, a former president of the club of Brothers and Friends, and an old comrade of Chauvel, happened to be at Phalsbourg about this time, and came to see us; he breakfasted with us. He was a well-informed man, acquainted with everything that took place both in France and Germany, not only in respect of politics, but also in medicine and new discoveries of every description. He gave us a detailed account of the forces to be employed in the expedition, and we were quite astonished; our best troops from the armies of the Rhine and Italy were engaged in it, with the most experienced sailors from the coasts of

Brittany and the South; our best generals, Kléber, Desaix, Reynier, Lannes, Murat, Davoust, Junot, Andréossy, Caffarelli du Falga, and Berthier, all the staunchest and most tried in the infantry, cavalry, artillery, and engineers. Schwân was on his way to Paris, because one of his old comrades, named Berthollet, had sent him word that he would introduce him to Bonaparte if he desired to join the expedition; that Monge, Geoffroy Saint-Hilaire, Depon, Larrey, Desgenettes, and many others were already engaged.

"What can they want with so many learned men?" asked Chauvel; "are there none in England? are we going into a savage country?"

"I cannot tell you," replied Schwân; "I do not understand it; there must be something more in it which we do not know."

"But," said Chauvel, "if all our best generals, our best troops, and the principal savants in the country are going, who will be left here in case of misfortune happening to us? The Congress of Rastadt has lasted too long already, which is not by any means a good sign. It is not out of the question that a gale of wind such as they had in '96 might disperse our fleet, or the English might attack it with superior numbers and destroy it; or during this expedition the Germans, seeing us without generals or veteran troops, or money, might take advantage of the opportunity to invade us. It would be no more than we ought to expect, for our invasion of Switzerland and Rome has disgusted all Europe, where we are now regarded as mere robbers, and the populace of Vienna has risen against us, as we saw in yesterday's *Moniteur*; it has broken all the French Ambassador's windows, and torn our flag down,

and this is the moment they have chosen to strip the country of troops ! It is not a question now either of Republicanism or Royalism, it is a national question. This Directory is not French, then ? No other government, not even that of Calonne, would have exposed us to such danger. And for whom, and for what ? To give a command of a great expedition to Bonaparte. Are these people mad ?”

“ No,” said Schwân, “ but the post of Director is worth having, and if Bonaparte stays there will soon be no place for him.”

Chauvel said nothing more ; he knew that long ago ; and Schwân having set off to try and get a place in the expedition, we waited to hear of its departure with a sort of uneasiness.

The bulk of the troops was concentrated at Toulon ; the movement in the interior and along the coast was very great. Genoa and Civita-Vecchia were stripped of their garrisons ; we were not sure if the 51st was not under orders to join the expedition. The gazettes called out for battle against the English, who were watching the Straits of Gibraltar. Brune had the command of the Army of Italy conferred on him ; nothing stirred in our neighbourhood ; all eyes were turned in that direction, when we suddenly heard that the fleet had weighed anchor the 26th or 27th of May, 1798, and that its destination was Egypt. Proclamations soon made their appearance.

“ See,” said Chauvel, “ Citizen Bonaparte prefers fighting a few handfuls of savages in Egypt to the English. I see, my poor Michel, that the real campaign will be fought here on the Rhine as in 1792 and '93. What have we got to do in Egypt ? It is true

that five or six famous brigands, Cambyeses, Alexander, Cæsar, and Mahomet, have been in that country in turns; it is in some degree their own, as Bengal is the tiger's birthplace; they turn their eyes thither, and are only happy there. But I cannot see any interest that we or our Republic can have in Egypt. We have trouble enough already in Europe to hold our own against monarchies, without having the Grand Turk on our hands besides."

And then taking one of the maps we sold, he remained poring over it for hours. Other patriots came and talked over the expedition with him. A report had already got about that we were about to attack the English in India; that was the opinion of Raphaël Manque and of old Toubac, the former schoolmaster of Diemerigen. The papers also said we were going to India, the country from whence we had our pepper and cinnamon.

Chauvel did not laugh as he listened to this frightful nonsense, but he said in a tone of despair—

"How stupid men are, and what a misfortune it is so!"

One day Toubac, with a big old German book under his arm, came to tell us that the pepper and cinnamon country was also that of the gold and diamond mines, and that he had found all that out in his book. He pointed out the passage with his finger, and cried—

"Now, Citizen Chauvel, do you see why Bonaparte wants to go to India?"

"Yes," said Chauvel, in a rage, "I understand that you and several others, unfortunately, are a set of asses who are led by the bridle till the time comes to put a pack on your backs. Do you know the distance it is

from Egypt to India? It is many hundred leagues across rivers, mountains, deserts, and marshes, inhabited by tribes more savage than our own wolves. The Arabs on their camels take weeks and months in going from Egypt to Mecca, which is not half way; a certain number among them always perish from hunger, thirst, and heat, and their skeletons indicate the road across the deserts. And do you suppose Bonaparte is not aware of all that, and that he did not look at the map, and that he wants to go to India to look for gold-dust and diamonds? No, Toubac, he understands these things better than we do, but he looks on the mass of the people as a sort of manure necessary to promote the growth of generals, and I begin to think is not far wrong. Since the Constitution of the Year III. has separated the people's interests from those of the bourgeois, the people has no longer any head, and the bourgeois has neither heart nor hands. Military power grows between these two classes, which will sooner or later destroy them both. If Bonaparte intended to attack the English he needed not to go so far; he had only to cross the Channel; the English were waiting for him on the coast fifteen or twenty leagues distant, just as well as in India, without taking into consideration the fact that he could do them much more harm at home than at the other end of the world."

"But," cried Toubac, "what is he going to do in Egypt?"

"He is going to make the world talk about Bonaparte! He is quietly going, with our best troops and best generals, to attack men who have neither muskets, nor ammunition, nor organisation. He will destroy them, that is a matter of course; he will send mag-

nificent bulletins home; people will talk about him; that is all he wants, till something better comes. During all this we at home may have armies of one or two hundred thousand men on our hands; we must call on the ban and arrière-ban of our youth to save our country. 'If we succeed there the survivors among us will shout, 'Victory in Egypt, victory! Hurrah for Bonaparte the invincible!' on purpose to depreciate Jourdan, Bernadotte, or Moreau.

"But if we should experience a check at home, as is very probable, having hardly any old troops left, Bonaparte and his fleet will come to save the country, and then the sycophants will begin to shout 'Victory!' for Bonaparte. The envious this time will hold their peace, because they are cowards! and Bonaparte as a conqueror will shut their mouths, for he will be master of us all. He will find plenty of pepper, cinnamon, diamonds, and gold-mines at home, and won't trouble his head about India, I will answer for it."

Toubac opened his eyes as wide as he could, and stammered out—

"Ah! I understand now."

You must not suppose that Chauvel was the only man clear-headed enough to see things in that light; thousands of people saw things as clearly as he did; all the old Jacobins said—

"Bonaparte is ambitious—he only thinks of himself—we have been taken in."

But there is a great difference between merely looking on and trying to stem the torrent; there are one's own interests in the way, or one wants to get married, or one is a father of a family; one recollects the baseness and treachery of both parties, and one thinks—

“What does it matter to me? If he is the strongest and most artful; if the nation, the Directory, the two councils, and the generals choose to grovel on their bellies before him, what good will it do if I remain standing? I shall be crushed, and for whom? For the selfish cowards who would call me a fool, and profit without hesitation by my death. And then my children would drag on a wretched existence; it is better to yield. Those who offer themselves up as a sacrifice to justice and the rights of man are foolish, for no one is grateful to them for doing so.”

Many would add—

“Let us take sides with the sycophants; then we may perhaps obtain honours, places, and pensions, and our descendants will be able to live in luxury at the expense of those who are too proud to bow the knee.”

But let us get on with our story, for all this is the reverse of amusing.

After Bonaparte's departure, for some days the affairs of the country had their turn in the minds of men—the occupation of the Valais by our troops, and the nomination of Bernadotte as ambassador to Batavia—but every one was still thinking about the fleet, the dangers of the sea, and the pursuit of the English, who would not fail to engage us. No news came. This profound silence made one's heart ache when one reflected how many thousand men and good citizens were risking their lives in such an enterprise. There was something said about the researches of our commissioners at Zurich to discover fresh treasure; of the departure of a Russian fleet of twelve ships of the line and ten frigates from the ports of the Crimea, with the intention of attacking ours in its course; of the blockade

of the Flessingue roads by the English ; of the arrest of Citizen Flick, editor of the *Gazette du Haut-Rhin*, by order of Schawembourg, general-in-chief of our army in Switzerland, and of other similar events of no great importance after all the agitation which had been so long tormenting us.

But still no news of the fleet !

Rapinat alone made as much noise and took up as much space in the gazettes as Bonaparte ; he never had money enough, and the Swiss cried like a hen about to lay ; but the idea of the fleet, of which no one heard anything, made us most uneasy. At last, on the 8th of July, six weeks after it left Toulon, we heard that our expedition had made itself master of Malta, which had only cost us the lives of three men. The Russian minister with eighty commandants of Malta had received orders to evacuate the island in three days, which made us expect soon to have the Russians on our hands as well as the English and the Austrians.

The Rastadt conferences were still carried on ; they had ceded the left bank of the Rhine, and given us Mayence in exchange for Venice, but our plenipotentiaries demanded Kehl and Cassel on the right bank ; they also wanted the demolition of Ehrenbreitstein, which our troops were still blockading during the conferences.

The Germans, on their side, would not consent to the abolition of estates belonging to the nobility, or of ecclesiastical property on the left bank, which Austria had already given up ; we should have had two codes of laws in the Republic, those existing before and those after '89, which was contrary to common sense. Besides, there were several questions of customs and dues to be

considered, and the construction of new bridges between the two Brisachs, and all this proceeded so slowly that no one could see the end of it.

As these various items were debated many leagues distant from home, and as the abolition of customs duties, the free navigation of the river, the division of the water and the islands, would greatly benefit our trade, all Alsace and Lorraine were interested in it. Bonaparte would not attend to it; such trifling affairs were unworthy the attention of so great a genius; his views extended to India. Metternich, the most adroit diplomatist in Germany, fought out the question with our diplomatists.

The congress was prolonged all this year; every instant it was reported that the conferences had been broken off. This famous peace of Campo-Formio, the glory of General Bonaparte, was not worth the fine fleet and army which he had carried off with him.

What is a peace worth without power to enforce its observance? The Directory, indeed, did not seem to have much confidence in it; the re-establishment of the duty on salt, a tax on doors and windows, the authority which it had just obtained from the councils to sell twenty-five millions' worth of national property, the decree passed by the councils in accordance with Jourdan's report that for the future our armies should be recruited by a forced conscription of citizens from twenty to twenty-five years of age, all betrayed a speedy want of men and money. It is not by acting bravely that one can reckon on national enthusiasm; the Directory was well aware of that; the days were gone by of volunteers and patriotic sacrifices. When the people are as nothing in the Constitution, they

must be dragged to fight with a rope round their neck; the country is then the man who gains victories and gives you pensions.

From day to day, and from week to week, thirty thousand families anxiously expected news from Egypt. We began to think they had all gone to the bottom, when the 19th of September, 1798, four months after the departure of the expedition, we read in the *Moniteur* "that General Bonaparte, after having disembarked at Alexandria, the 23rd Messidor, had made a friendly treaty with the Arab chiefs; that he had directed his columns on Cairo, which he entered the 5th Thermidor at the head of the army; and that, in fact, being master of all Lower Egypt, he was continuing his march; that the squadron of Admiral Brueys, which was anchored in the Bay of Aboukir, was about to return to France when an English squadron, superior in force and in numbers to ours, had attacked it; that the battle had been most obstinately contested on both sides; that the admiral's ship had been blown up, and two or three others sunk; that other vessels, both English and French, had gone ashore and been wrecked, and that other French vessels had remained totally dismantled on the field of battle."

I need not attempt to describe men's faces after reading this article.

"All that," said Chauvel, "means that we have no longer any fleet; that our best army is six hundred leagues distant in the desert, surrounded by Turks and Arabs, without the means of returning to France, nor of receiving any assistance from hence; and that the English, the Italians, and the Germans will take advantage of the opportunity to fall upon us all to-

gether. During the Constituent and the Legislative Assemblies, and the Convention, we only saw the first coalition. We are about to see the second. We shall now enjoy the favours of General Bonaparte."

A little while after these terrible news we heard that the famous Nelson, on his return from Aboukir with his fleet, had been received with open arms by the King of Naples; that he repaired his damaged vessels in that port, and passed his time amidst fêtes and triumphs.

We next heard that the Russians were marching across Poland, and that the King of Naples was attacking the Roman Republic, and that Piedmont and Tuscany were in insurrection.

Championnet, who commanded in Rome, marched to meet the Neapolitans. He beat these miserable troops and drove them back to Naples. Numbers of beggars called *lazzaroni* came from the city to their assistance. Championnet was obliged to fire on these wretches with grape, and burn their hovels. Father Gourdiere, who was there, then told me that these besotted creatures sleep in the sun on the steps of the churches, and live on a little macaroni. I can well believe it. It is to this state that our former kings, our seigneurs, and our bishops wished to reduce us, that they might live without fear.

Men's pride, instruction, and courage were in their paths a stumbling-block. Under most rulers the human race would gradually sink to the condition of snails, or caterpillars, or *lazzaroni*. What would that matter to them? Then they could live in peace; and the profound misery, the degradation of their fellow-creatures would not prevent their calling themselves God's representatives on earth.

So these lazzaroni were soundly beaten; and their King Ferdinand, who represented God to them, the Queen of Naples, sister of Marie-Antoinette, who hated us, and the whole court made their escape, carrying their treasure with them, and leaving the beggars to defend themselves as they could.

Championnet then created the Parthenopean Republic, which made the fifth we had created in Italy—one as solidly established as the others.

While Championnet was marching on Naples the Directory sent Joubert orders to invade Piedmont, in order to prevent the King of Sardinia harassing our rear. The king escaped to the Island of Sardinia. We had occupied all his fortresses, incorporated his army with our own, and we thus remained masters of all the country from the Alps to the Sicilian Sea.

We were now in December, and this was the close of the year 1798.





CHAPTER XIII.

THE following year was destined to be a boisterous one; we could feel it beforehand, for Paul I., Emperor of Russia, who had been driven raving mad by his mother Catherine and his father Peter III., by causing him to be confined for so many years—this maniac, who had just mounted the throne, was already hastening to arms, taking our émigrés into his service, and declaring himself the friend of Louis XVIII. He considered himself grossly insulted because Bonaparte had occupied Malta, and proclaimed himself Grand Master of the Order of the Knights of St. John, an antiquated idea in which there was no sense in these days, for these knights, who numbered two or three hundred, vowed to defend Christianity against the Turks—we have seen what a brilliant resistance they offered. Five-and-twenty volunteers of '92, though only peasants' sons, would have better supported their honour and their rights. No matter, however; the maniac had millions of men at his command, and no one dared to talk reason to him. He was about to

cause thousands of soldiers to be massacred for a whim which happened to pass through his head at the moment, which shows the beauty of a despotic government. If only men of this stamp existed, the human race would soon come to an end. Happily while despots are only thinking of destroying their fellow-creatures, unpretending men without pride, without saying that they are the envoys of the Almighty, do as much good as the others do evil.

I have already told you about Doctor Schwân, who wanted to embark for Egypt with the expedition. This good fellow had the good fortune to arrive too late—all the good appointments were given away. On his return from Paris, at the end of several months, he stopped with us again, and told us of an extraordinary discovery, a benefit to mankind without a parallel. But you will not be able to understand the importance of this benefit unless you can form to yourself some idea of the ravages of the small-pox before 1798. It was frightful! Sometimes this disease broke out in one village, sometimes in another; it spread like wildfire everybody, but especially fathers and mothers, trembled before it. They used to say—

“It is close by!—it is coming to us—so many people have had it—such a woman, or such a girl has been horribly disfigured—this one has lost an eye, that one is not to be recognised—so many dead—so many deaf—so many blind!”

What consternation there was everywhere! And then, after several weeks' illness, the poor wives and poor daughters, whom we had seen looking so fresh and so fair, made their appearance again with their faces tied with a handkerchief, in despair, ashamed of showing

themselves—they were only to be recognised by the voice.

“Good heavens! is that Catherine? that pretty Louisa?” or “Is that Jacob of such a place? is it possible?”

I have seen many such sights in our shop. A promise of marriage was very little binding then, you may believe.

But the children were the worst. They talked about inoculation, and said, when the small-pox made its appearance in this place or that—

“You must go there and put your child in the same bed as the patient. He will not have it so severely; besides, it is better to lose the young ones!—besides, the skin of children is more delicate, and they have a better chance of escaping!”

I have been talked to in this manner at least a hundred times. It was but just, and very good sense; but put yourself in the situation of a father who goes away with his child in his arms; fancy how the little thing clings to him, and then how he says to himself—

“No! not yet—by-and-by will be time enough.”

And then when he comes back again, and says to the old people, who are waiting for him in fear and trembling—

“Well, grandfather, or grandmother, I had not the courage to go; you must take him yourself.”

And the old people think to themselves—

“He is quite right; we would rather wait.”

And we waited. And then all of a sudden the small-pox breaks out in the town; either your children or your neighbour's catch it. It was the most horrible event of that period after the famine—three-fourths of the popu-

lation, especially the country people, who were more exposed to cold, were disfigured.

Two or three times Chauvel spoke to me about having Annette inoculated, but I would not, nor Margaret either.

As for little Jean, I said to myself—

“It is of no use thinking about a man’s good looks. Let us go to Henridorff; the small-pox is there, but in a mild form.”

But when the time came for going, my courage failed me.

Altogether, what with numberless other causes of uneasiness, with the laws which were taking away our rights from us, and the dread of war returning, I assure you the small-pox was really too much.

Inoculation only gave confidence to those who could not feel much. Our children were already three and four years old; so, as far as I was concerned, I preferred trusting to chance, and none of Chauvel’s reasons were good enough to induce me to think otherwise.

Just about this time, then, Doctor Schwân arrived from Paris. I might live for two centuries, but I shall always hear him talking to us about the new discovery, called the cow-pox, just come from England, a protection from the small-pox, and his explanation that it was a sort of matter from the cow’s udder, and that children being inoculated with this matter by a very slight puncture were preserved from the disease; that an English doctor named Jenner had made this discovery, and had practised it for fifteen years on numbers of people; that it had always succeeded perfectly, and that generally all those who are about cows, the women who milk them, and those who attend to them, and

have these pimples on their hands, are absolutely safe from the small-pox.

My heart swelled with the desire within me to believe what he told us. I looked at the children, and thought to myself—

“If it is but true!—if it were only possible! you would remain just as you are now, my poor little children, with your cheeks as rosy, your eyes as blue, and your lips as uninjured as they are now.”

Margaret looked at me; I saw she was making the same reflections.

Chauvel wanted to know everything, down to the smallest details. Schwân, who was naturally talkative, as all old savants are, liked to expatiate on the discovery. He had read the account of all the experiments made up to that time, the certificates, and the vouchers for their authenticity—in fact, he thought there could be no doubt about it. Suddenly Chauvel exclaimed—

“I know this disease among the cows—there is no danger in it. I have often seen it among the farmers in the Vosges, in damp stables near rivers; the pimples are large and white.”

“Yes,” said Schwân, who began to give a description of them, so well that Chauvel said—

“Exactly so; the matter is as transparent as water. Upon my word, if I had not had the small-pox already, from what you, Schwân, have been telling me about these experiments, and the proofs of them, I would not wait long before I was inoculated for the cow-pox.”

“Nor I,” said Margaret.

I, too, said I was quite confident about it; but we had all had the small-pox in the family; I was pretty

well marked by it; Margaret very slightly; Chauvel and Schwân were quite disfigured by it.

We were thinking about the children, and no one liked to broach the subject, when Schwân began by saying that he had three of his daughter's children at Strasbourg, and as soon as he returned he should vaccinate them himself, for the cow-pox was nothing but vaccine.

"If you give me your word as a patriot that you intend to do so, I will vaccinate ours, and then all the others I can."

Schwân swore he would do so, and that he would be responsible for its success; but first of all it was necessary to obtain the vaccinating matter. The doctor left at five by the courier, and promised to attend to it and give us notice of the result.

After he left us we were tormented by uneasiness, fear, and a desire to hear from him as soon as possible. We talked about it every evening, but for five or six weeks, not having had a line from him, we thought it was a failure. Chauvel said that Schwân had probably discovered that the cow-pox was of no avail. I was almost pleased to hear it, for on such occasions we prefer seeing experiments made by others, and not by ourselves.

This month, February, 1799, the small-pox broke out among us in so frightful a manner that the church bells round the town were ringing all day; it grew worse and worse—from Wéchem to Mittelbronn, from Mittelbronn to Lixheim. One morning, Jean Bonhomme, the husband of Christine Létumier, my old playfellow, came to our shop without hat or cravat, half dead with grief. He wept and cried—

“My wife and children are lost!”

Bonhomme had two little boys, who used to play with our children on market days. That good creature Christine had always a great friendship for me; she never forgot the waltzes we had together at Lutzelbourg; the forge where every morning she used to come with naked arms to fetch water from the pump. Then she married, and I was her bridegroom's best man. Our children were fond of one another; his eldest boy, Jean, with hair as curly as a sheep's back, went to kiss my little Annette, and cry out—

“This is my wife—I won't have any other!”

Which made us laugh.

Picture to yourself our distress; these people almost belonged to our family; they were our oldest friends and first customers. I tried to encourage poor Bonhomme, saying I hoped they would get over it, and telling him not to despair; but he lost his head, and replied—

“Ah, Michel, Michel, if you could see them! They look as if they had been burnt before the fire; and Christine, who has been nursing them, has taken to her bed with it too. My God! I wish we were all dead together!”

He ran off to Tribolin, the apothecary. Two days afterwards we heard the children were dead, and that the mother had the disease in its most aggravated form.

Father Létumier came into town the day of the funeral; he was crazy; and though a very sober man, he went and drank some wine at the auberge of the Cheval Brun. We could hear him shouting out—

“There is no such thing as a Supreme Being—nothing of the sort—nothing. Villains can keep their children, and we lose ours!”

He came over to us, and fell with a groan into Chauvel's arms. Such was this horrid disease; no one was safe; you might wait fifty years and not be sure, if you have never had it. And now you may think in what despair we were at hearing nothing about the cow-pox, the more so that the small-pox was now close to Phalsbourg. This was in the spring. One morning, as I was about to start for Strasbourg by the courier to settle an account with Simonis, just as I was going out with Chauvel's little portmanteau in my hand, in came Doctor Schwân with two other respectable bourgeois, who saluted us and smiled. Chauvel recognised the voice of his old comrade; he opened the library door, and Schwân exclaimed—

“Well, I have tried it on mine—are you ready with yours?”

“Where is the vaccine matter?” asked Chauvel.

“Here in my instrument-case.”

Then the doctor showed us the vaccine, quite fresh, in a small bottle. We were all much impressed at the sight of it, and the people in the shop leaning round us looked on in wonder.

We went into the library with these strangers. The two were both doctors. They explained to us how the pimples formed, how they burst and dried up, that it only caused very little inflammation, and that the children who had been vaccinated in their own families were already doing very well; and that it all happened as the English doctor Jenner had said it would. But for all that neither I nor Margaret would have had the courage to keep our word with Dr. Schwân if Chauvel had not exclaimed—

“That is enough. From the moment that you,

Schwân, and these two citizens here present have tried it, I have every confidence in it. Let us try it on our children at once; what say you?"

He looked at us. Margaret turned pale, and I held my head down and said nothing. After a moment's pause Margaret said—

"Will it hurt them?"

"No," replied Dr. Schwân, "a slight scratch on the arm, and a little vaccine; the children will hardly feel it."

She went and fetched the little girl, who was asleep in her cradle, kissed it, and gave it to Chauvel, saying—

"You take it, father; you have confidence in it."

Then I gained courage, for I was thinking how the small-pox was already extending from Mittelbronn to Maisons-Rouges. I went to look for the boy, who was running about the market.

"Come hither, Jean-Pierre," cried I. I took him by the hand, and I felt quite beside myself. Below, in the library, Annette was screaming on her mother's knees. When I went in I saw her shoulder was naked, and there was a little drop of blood on the arm. She held her little hands out to me; I took her up, and asked if we had not better wait with Jean-Pierre to see how it answered.

"No," said Chauvel, "nothing can be worse than the small-pox."

"Now be easy," said Schwân, laughing; "I am answerable for everything."

The little boy looked at us, and said—

"What's the matter, grandfather?"

"Nothing; take off your jacket; you are not afraid, I hope?"

Our little Jean-Pierre resembled his grandfather in disposition. He took off his jacket without saying a word, and was vaccinated. He looked at them while doing it; so Margaret said, for I had left the room, reproaching myself for not having prevented it, and angry with Chauvel, my wife, and every one present. As long as the pimples lasted I was afraid, and so was Margaret, though she did not let me notice it, for fear she should frighten me still more. At last they dried up, and all I could think of was—

“Please God it may be effectual.”

I was right in forming such a wish, for the small-pox was already in the town; every day people in the shop said—

“It is in such a street—it is in the place. So many soldiers were sent to the hospital yesterday—so many more have taken it—such and such a child will die before night.”

And so on continually.

I watched ours. They were always well. The small-pox went the round of the quarter, but did not visit us. About the same time Schwân wrote from Strasbourg to say that of all the children that had been vaccinated, not one had taken the disease. Then our joy and happiness was indescribable. Chauvel gave himself not a moment's rest; he wanted to vaccinate all the children in the district, and went to Strasbourg, on purpose to obtain some vaccine.

But you must not suppose it was an easy thing to persuade parents to let themselves and their children be vaccinated; though the people easily believe any nonsense they are told when the object is to deceive them and get their money from them, they are in-

credulous to a degree when you tell them anything which it is their obvious interest to believe. It was not quite the same thing over again as the history of the potatoes, for if the Baraque people turned Maître Jean into ridicule when he first made up his mind to plant those grey dried-up cuttings, that only lasted a year; when they began to bloom, and later still, when at every thrust of the fork they could see a new sort of chestnut as big as their fists, then they were obliged to confess Maître Jean was no fool. The next year every one was in a hurry to get seed from him, and also to forget what a great service he had rendered the country.

But for vaccination it was another matter. You would have thought the people did you a favour in listening to you while you told them about it, and that they would have been too happy to submit to a trifling scratch, if by so doing they could avoid such a frightful scourge.

I confess for my part I would not have given myself so much trouble; the moment the idiots laughed at me I should have left them to themselves.

But Chauvel, after having been maltreated and insulted by them, was content to attribute it to their ignorance, and only thought how to establish a system of vaccination. He had so much satisfaction in vaccinating people that he had established a reception-room in our former reading-room. M. the curé Christophe brought him dozens every day. Chauvel would begin by telling them the advantage of the cow-pox, and the moment he made a convert his face lighted up with joy. He pulled out his lancet, helped them to take off their coat or their blouse, and then vaccinated them, saying at the same time—

"Now be careful not to wipe this little scratch ; pu a bit of rag on it ; the pimple will form to-morrow or next day ; a little sooner or later makes no difference ; it will dry up, and you will be safe."

When they seemed inclined to resist he got angry, then flattered and encouraged them : you would have thought this world his especial care, and that he was charged with saving all our country from small-pox. I have often seen him go across the shop and take a fifteen-sous piece from the till and thrust it into the hand of some wretch, saying—

"Come and let me vaccinate you."

This enthusiasm made me angry, of course ; I would much rather have kept our money ; but I did not dare make any observation about it to Chauvel ; his indignation against selfish people, who only cared about themselves, would have burst out, and Margaret would have said he was right.

Our shop thus became an office for the nurses in the vicinity—the vaccination-office, in fact ; and this good man was not satisfied with that ; the whole blessed day he was receiving letters, notices, articles relating to the cow-pox ; he thought about them and wrote answers to them. Margaret often took a share in his work, while I often said to myself—

"Is it possible to lose one's time, one's trouble, and one's money for people who are not in the slightest degree grateful to you, but who are capable of suing you for damages if they caught the slightest illness?"

I thought that was a little too bad.

All the same, our business was not going on badly ; on the contrary, the name of Chauvel was spread abroad ; it was known for ten leagues round, not only as

grocer, mercer, dealer in stuffs and brandy, but also as ex-representative of the people and vaccinator. People called him everywhere "the representative, the vaccinator, and the librarian," and even up in the mountains they knew who he was; that brought us more custom than ever.





CHAPTER XIV.



T was about this period that the despots of Europe, having learnt that the flower of our army was in Egypt, unable to return for want 'of transport, began to conspire against us once more. Pitt undertook to provide money for the war, the Emperor of Austria the men, and the maniac who had declared himself Grand Master of the Order of Knights of Malta soon put two armies, each forty thousand strong, in motion against the Republic. The gazettes informed us that Souvaroff, the most famous general the Russians possessed, the murderer of Turks and Poles, the slaughterer of women and children, and the incendiary of Praga, was commander-in-chief of these barbarians.

All these preparations did not prevent the Rastadt conferences being still carried on. The Germans all refused to cede Kohl and Cassel or the right bank to us. They desired to be masters at home, as was very natural. But for all that we should have had peace long before, if the Directory would have consented to sacrifice the princes of the Empire to the Emperor Francis, who only wanted to aggrandise himself at the expense of

Germany. But we had no interest in strengthening Austria; besides, Prussia supported the rights of these small princes, and good sense told us to treat her with caution.

At last, while Metternich was amusing our plenipotentiaries, the Russians having arrived in Bohemia, Francis II. made haste to occupy the Grisons with a corps of six thousand men, and every one understood what that meant.

Our Directory began to exclaim and ask for explanations, and at last to declare that the continuation of the Russian march on German territory would be regarded as a declaration of war. Francis did not take the trouble to reply. The petty German princes, who, until this, had all accepted our peace conditions, left the Congress at Rastadt one after the other; our plenipotentiaries were soon all alone with Metternich, surrounded by Austrian troops. No one could doubt any longer that war was about to reappear in a more terrible guise than before, and that all our Republican conquests were once more in danger. Recruiting was pushed on vigorously, but not so successfully as formerly. In June, 1791, we raised one hundred and fifty thousand men; in September, 1792, a hundred thousand; in February, 1793, first of all, three hundred thousand; and then again in April, thirty thousand more; and then again in August came the levée en masse, one million and fifty thousand men; these were the last great levies of troops. This was sufficient to conquer Holland, the left bank of the Rhine, Switzerland, and Italy; to drive the Spaniards back into Spain, and to form the two expeditions to Ireland and to Egypt.

The conscription of the 3rd Vendémiaire, Year VII.,

was put in action; it produced a hundred and ninety thousand conscripts, who were drilled without loss of time.

In the meantime veteran troops were pushed forward; they passed through our town, principally infantry, going into Switzerland, where Massena, who was commander-in-chief, occupied the line of the Rhine, from the mountains down to Constance. A great quantity of cavalry took the other direction, through Alsace, to join the Army of the Rhine under General Jourdan; others went still farther, to Mayence and Dusseldorf, to join the army of observation commanded by Bernadotte. These veteran troops hardly amounted to a hundred thousand men. The conscript levies were not yet ready, and could only join later; and the first of them were sent into Italy, where Schérer was in command. I have not forgotten these distant occurrences, because Marescot, in one of his letters, complained bitterly about it. We had then ninety thousand men to defend Switzerland, Alsace, and the whole length of the left bank of the Rhine as far as Holland. The Germans, commanded by the Archduke Charles, were more than seventy thousand strong in Bavaria; in the Vorarlberg there were twenty-five thousand, commanded by General Hotze, a Swiss; in the Tyrol, about forty-five thousand under Bellegarde; and in Italy, sixty thousand under Kray. Forty thousand English and Russians were to land in Holland, where Brune had ten thousand men; and twenty thousand English and Sicilians were to land at Naples, where Macdonald had replaced Championnet.

The immense force displayed by our enemies showed that they had long since made preparations to invade us, and that the Congress of Rastadt was nothing more

than a blind. They numbered more than three hundred thousand men against our one hundred thousand at the opening of the campaign, and Souvaroff was to reinforce them soon. The army which Bonaparte had led into Egypt, how useful it would have been ! However, we came out of it all the same, and without the great man, who came by-and-by to ask us—

“What have you done with my companions ? What is become of the peace I left you ?” &c.

His peace, indeed ! that was well worth talking about ; it was the Rastadt comedy ; and as to his companions, he had left them in Egypt to their fate. How can a man have such assurance, and so reckon on the folly and cowardice of others to allow him to reproach them with the misfortunes of which he himself had been the cause ? After all he was right—he had succeeded ! That is an answer to everything for fools and rogues. But it is only a very natural observation to make, that effrontery constitutes half the genius of many men. .

Let us get on.

Jourdan opened the campaign of 1799. His army extended from Mayence to Basle in Switzerland. Our country was flooded with troops. All of a sudden they concentrated themselves in the valley of Alsace ; the general and his staff arriving from Metz passed through our town as the snow was melting, and then on the 1st of March we heard in the evening that he had passed the Rhine at Kehl ; that General Ferino in command of the right wing was following his movement at Huningen, that everything was crossing the bridges, artillery, cavalry, and infantry, and that only a weak garrison had been left in Strasbourg. The last line of stragglers descended in the direction of Saverne ; it soon disap-

peared, and the whole army, right wing, centre, and left wing, was in Germany. A dead calm, to which people were no longer accustomed, succeeded all these movements. Everything was dull and deserted; we began to look out for news. First of all came the proclamation of the Directory:—

“Proclamation of the Executive Directory.

“The troops of His Majesty the Emperor, in defiance of a convention made at Rastadt the 1st of December, 1797, have recrossed the Inn, and have quitted his hereditary States. This movement has been made in combination with the march of Russian troops, which are actually at this moment in the States of the Emperor, declaring openly that they have come to combat the French Republic,” &c., &c.

The Directory finished by declaring that as soon as the Russians evacuated Germany we would also evacuate it.

I will spare you an account of this long campaign, where all the horrors of war once more spread along both sides of the river; the taking of Manheim and the invasion of Suabia by Jourdan, the invasion of the Grisons, the Coire, and the whole valley of the Rhine, from its source by the St. Gothard to the Lake of Constance, by Masséna; the invasion of the valley of the Inn and the occupation of the Engadine by Lecourbe,* so that they almost touched hands across the Alps from Naples to Dusseldorf; then followed the defeat of Jourdan at Stokach and his retreat into Franconia; the combined attack on the Vorarlberg and the valley of the Inn and of Munster by Masséna and Lecourbe; the appoint-

ment of Masséna as commander-in-chief of the armies of Helvetia, of the Danube, and of the army of observation; the rupture of the Congress of Rastadt and the murder of our plenipotentiaries Bonnier and Roberjot by Austrian hussars, who lay in wait for them on their road at night.

These events are well known! I was not there then; others, the last of those left here, can tell you about those bottomless gulfs among the higher Alps, where battles were fought; about those narrow bridges across abysses, which had to be carried at the point of the bayonet; about torrents sweeping away the dead and the wounded together; and about marches over glaciers and snow, where eagles only had ever passed before. Yes, it is a grand campaign to talk about—a Republican campaign. But all I can tell you is that convoys halted in our town as usual, that our hospitals were filled with numerous wounded men, some frost-bitten, others wounded, and others, again, exhausted by fatigue and hunger, for there had never been a greater scarcity of food; and that after the assassination of our plenipotentiaries thousands of young men marched off calling for vengeance, as in '92 and '93.

While these tremendous struggles were taking place, the elections of the Year VII. occurred, where the Director Rewbell was replaced by the Abbé Sieyès, who for the last six years had been hiding in the Marais, and then among the intriguers and tremblers of the councils. Sieyès himself boasted of it; he used to say—"While the others were sending one another to the guillotine I lived!" It was hardly worth while, having once uttered two or three well-turned sentences which all the nation admired, to become contemptible

afterwards. That proves that heart and intellect do not always go together. It was said that Sieyès had a fine constitution in his pocket; and as that of the Year III. had had its day, Sieyès had been named Director in the hope that he would produce something novel. The French love novelty, and then they love oracles too, and Sieyès passed as one. I have met with five or six like that in the course of my life; they came to a strange end.

The elections of the Year VII., which had no interest for the people, as they had no vote to give, sent several *ci-devant* patriots to the councils. We then heard Lucien Bonaparte mentioned for the first time; we had already Joseph and Napoleon, and we were to have a Lucien.

What a good thing the conquest of Corsica was for the Bonapartes! At home they would have been farmers, clerks in offices, minor bourgeois, well satisfied if they could make both ends meet and keep a few goats among the rocks. In France they were presidents of the council, ambassadors, generals-in-chief. It seems as if the French were too stupid to govern themselves, since they go and look for masters abroad.

The new councils, which aimed at upsetting the Directory, called for accounts. They obliged Treillard to resign, and put Gohier in his place. They were about to force Lareveillère and Merlin to resign also, to replace them by their own creatures. These two Directors exclaimed—"Why, they want to put France in the hands of the Bonaparte family!" And this exclamation retarded their fall a few days; but the feeling against them was so strong they could not resist it, and they retired the 18th of June, 1799. The Girondin

Roger Ducos and General Moulin, of whom the people had never heard anything either good or bad, were named Directors, and among the former Directors Barras only remained, the protector of Bonaparte and the disgrace of our Republic.

All the ministry was changed. We had Robert Lindet at the finances; Fouché at the police; Treilhارد as minister for foreign affairs; Cambacérès minister of justice; and Bernadotte war minister. These changes of the 30th Prairial caused no sensation. They took place among the bourgeois. The Directory had overthrown the councils on the 18th Fructidor; now the councils upset the Directory. The people looked on, waiting for the moment for them to interfere. All they wanted was a leader; but as Danton, Robespierre, and Marat were sleeping in peace, the soldiers had it all to themselves. If Bonaparte was aware of these facts he must have repented having gone to Egypt; and the minister Bernadotte must have laughed. This Gascon held all the cards in his own hand—all the Jacobins looked at him.

Chauvel, in spite of his zeal in the cause of vaccination, began to read the papers again. His indignation this time was against Sieyès, whom he looked upon as a hypocrite, capable of coming to terms with any one for the purpose of devouring the Republic and of getting this famous constitution accepted, which every one was talking about and no one knew anything about; for M. the Abbé Sieyès never mentioned it to any one but his intimate friends, knowing very well no Republican would have anything to do with it.

But while intriguers were thus sharing appointments among themselves—no more caring for the people than

if they did not exist—the affairs of the nation were becoming extremely serious. If the gentlemen who only looked after their own interests had charge of the safety of France, it would have run great risks of being divided among our enemies. Fortunately, the people was there—as it always was—in the hour of danger.

The Austrian Field-Marshal Kray had so utterly defeated old Schérer at Magnano, that our Army of Italy, reduced to twenty-eight thousand men, had been obliged to retreat behind the Adda; and then Moreau, displaying true patriotism, had taken the command of it. Then Souvaroff arrived at the head of forty thousand Russians, and having also the same number of Austrians under his command. He had crossed the Adda by surprise at Cassano, and obliged Moreau to evacuate Milan and cross the Pô again, abandoning three-fourths of Northern Italy. Moreau knew very well what he was doing. He knew that an army of twenty-eight thousand men, already beaten and discouraged, could not offer much resistance to eighty thousand victorious troops, full of confidence in their leaders. But he also knew that a good general is never entirely routed, and that he saves all he can possibly save. That was enough for him. This time he preferred duty and the safety of his country to his own reputation, which never happened to Bonaparte.

Souvaroff attempted to pursue him by passing the Pô in his rear, but he was repulsed. All the Italians had risen against us, and our fortresses were besieged. The retreat of Macdonald, who was bringing eighteen thousand men along the coast from Naples, was threatened by forces twice and three times as numerous as his own. Moreau was drawing near him to assist

him in operating his junction with himself. But about the end of June we learned that Macdonald had been defeated by Souvaroff on the Trébia after a three days' engagement; and that at the same time Moreau, profiting by the absence of the Russians, had beaten Bellegarde at Cassina-Grossa, and then picked up the remains of the Army of Naples near Genoa.

As soon as Sieyès was named Director he caused Macdonald to be deprived of his command. He recalled Moreau, and named Joubert, one of Bonaparte's lieutenants, commander of the Army of Italy. Joubert commanded the 17th military division; he was the man for Sieyès, the sword he wanted to apply his constitution and become his right arm. As this general had as yet no great reputation, Sieyès sent him to Italy to beat Souvaroff, who had conquered this country in much less time than Bonaparte, and who, in his barbarous proclamations, threatened to march to Paris over our bodies and proclaim Louis XVIII. king. After that Sieyès and Joubert would have been the two great men—the legislator and the hero of the Republic.

We had two more letters from Marescot, this time rather less arrogant in tone than that of '96; Lisbeth had lost nearly all her Roman and Neapolitan booty at the passage of the Trébia; but our principal satisfaction was to know they were alive and well.

You can understand that if these misfortunes in Italy affected us, those which were approaching us more nearly from Switzerland and the banks of the Rhine rendered us much more anxious. After the defeat of Jourdan at Stokach and his retreat into Alsace, Masséna, who had been appointed to the chief command

of the three armies, could no longer maintain his advanced position in Switzerland; he had evacuated the Vorarlberg; and as the Archduke and Hotze harassed his retreat, he gave them battle at Frauenfeld and beat them, which allowed him to fall back quietly on the Linth and the Limmat.

The enemy, however, followed him close; two actions were fought before Zurich, but, though a victor, Masséna left this city and took up a better position on Mount Albis, behind the lakes of Zurich and Wallenstadt. Unfortunately the cantons had risen against him; they would supply him with nothing, and forced requisitions in these ruined districts produced next to nothing. The Germans, who were close to the duchy of Baden, drew all their supplies from home.

Lecourbe, attacked by superior forces on the Saint-Gothard, had also effected his retreat by descending the course of the Reuss. We had to live ourselves and supply the means of living to all these men. Consequently requisitions of all descriptions poured in; grain, forage, and cattle were again levied round us; purveyors went all over Alsace, Lorraine, and the Vosges, buying at any price, but they only gave bills—there was no ready money, it was all hidden away. Wheat rose from 34 to 40 francs the setier of 240lbs.; black wheat from 15 to 30 francs the setier of 160lbs.; barley weighing 200lbs. the setier rose from 18 to 35 francs; one pound of beef from 13 sous to 23; of mutton from 14 to 24; everything else, salted meat, bacon, oil, beer, wine, rose in proportion. One hundred trusses of ordinary fodder, weighing 11 quintals, sprang from 50 to 150 francs. All these prices were set down by me on the cover of my ledger, as something extraordinary.

We were a long way from Zurich ; what, then, must have been the prices in the neighbourhood of the armies ? Then the cost of carriage, the contractors' risks at a time when the roads were swarming with brigands, must be added ; and then, after leaving Basle, the danger of being cut off by the enemy ; the expenses of the escorts, for gendarmes escorted every convoy. I think an additional third, or even one-half, would not be too high an estimate.

If I had been wealthier I should have taken one or two convoys of grain on my own account, notwithstanding the opposition of Chauvel, who looked upon every contractor as a rogue ; the love of gain began to grow on me ! and then I should have picked out three or four old comrades from Baraques, or from the town, taken them into my service, and we could have escorted my supply of grain to the camp ; but I had not enough ready money, and I had no great confidence in the bills of the Directory.

Masséna remained there three months inactive ; couriers by scores went backwards and forwards ; we could not understand what it meant. Indignation was great against Masséna, the more so when we learned the terrible defeat at Novi, where Joubert was killed, and the approach of another Russian army, under the orders of Korsakoff, to reinforce the Archduke Charles. We began to say—"He wants to have them all on his hands at once before he stirs !"

And what exasperated men most was that Souvaroff was already threatening to pass the Saint-Gothard, and Lecourbe was hurrying to take up his former position to bar his advance. People who were cleverer than others considered it madness on the part of the Russian, but

such a savage was capable of attempting everything. He had not been beaten yet; he was described as a sort of savage on horseback, preaching about Saint-Nicolas and all the saints to his soldiers, and telling his beads while the fighting was going on. The more brutal a man may be, the greater is the authority he possesses over brutes; I have never thought it required very great genius to cut men to pieces, climb mountains, and burn villages; the man who invented matches is to my mind a hundred times more worthy of note than such heroes. I thought, therefore, Souvaroff was quite capable of making the attempt, and I was very uneasy; for all the aristocrats were waiting for this barbarian as their Messiah, when we received the following letter from my old comrade Jean-Baptiste Sôme:—

“ To the Citizen Michel Bastien.

*“ Zurich, 7 Vendémiaire of the Year VIII. of the
Republic one and indivisible.*

“ Victory! my dear Michel, victory! We have just passed through a very critical state of things: three months of famine, three months without rations, our feet in the lake, and our backs to the snow. We plundered, and cried out against that rascally Directory, which sent us by every courier orders to fight, but not a sou in money. With the archduke in front of us, Jellachich and Hotze on our flanks, Korsakoff approaching, and insurrection in our rear, it was not pleasant, Michel—no, there was nothing to laugh at. At last our turn came; the Supreme Being had the upper hand, and Saint-Nicolas is stretching his long legs towards Moscow, with his wallet over his shoulder,

and his can [on his hip. What a battle! and what a rout!

"You must know that last week we were still in our cantonments between Brugg and Wollishoffen, tramping about and inquiring of one another how long this would last. The autumnal breeze from the glaciers began to blow, and sharpened our appetite. The Austrian outposts began to be withdrawn from the borders of the lake, and the great-coats and pointed caps to relieve them. Korsakoff had just arrived; Masséna, Soult, Mortier, and Ney had pushed reconnoitring parties as far as Zug, Rapperschwyll, Næfels, &c. German hussars came and defied us as far as the Linth and the Limmat, and called out to us—'Come here, you sans-culottes! Come here, you heap of vermin! You have lost your courage! You are only cowards!' This put us in a great rage, but our orders were not to fire a shot.

"Now another story begins—couriers arrive from Urséren and Altorf: 'Souvaroff is marching to turn our flank; the victor at Cassano, the Trébia, and Novi passes the Saint-Gothard. Gudin, with his handful of men, can offer no resistance to this 'devourer of atheists;' Lecourbe hastens to defend the 'Pont du Diable.' That day, Michel, I thought the Republic was really shaking, and that we were betrayed. But the Italian pretended to be asleep; he watched, like the cats, with his eyes shut, but his ears open; he was dreaming about the archduke on the road to Philipsbourg with his cavalry and infantry—only leaving his guns with the Russians—and the 4th Vendémiaire, at four in the morning, our captain, Sébastien Foy, galloped up with orders for us to march down on the

Limmat, a river about as wide as the little Rhine, but more rapid; it passes Zurich, and takes the name of Linth after it has crossed the lake. Down we go at a gallop, artillery and pontoon train, with our boats, guns, ammunition, ropes, poles, and nails. We put our guns in battery opposite the Russians, who hold the other side, and who open a frightful rolling fire upon us. We have to make a bridge of boats. The bottom was rocky, the poles slipped, and the anchors would not hold, and, in spite of our grape, the enemy's fire increased. The engineers lost courage; Dedon, the chief of the artillery brigade, a countryman of ours from Lorraine, came down to give them more heart for it, and to direct the operations. In an hour's time, just at daybreak, the bridge, cut up three times by the cannon-balls, began to hold together, and our columns crossed it at a run. At nine we had ten thousand men on the other side. The battle then extended along a line of six leagues, for while we were passing the Limmat, below Zurich, Soult passed the Linth above it between the two lakes. Two hundred men, swimming with their sabres between their teeth, formed the advanced guard; they killed the enemy's outposts. Hotze hurried up, and was killed there.

"At that moment, my dear Michel, though we have heard some fine cannon-firing in La Vendée, I can assure you that even at Mans it was nothing like this. The mountains shook; at two paces distant you could not hear the word of command, and through gaps in the smoke I could see the surface of the lake boiling like water in a pan from the cannon-balls and grape. Towards evening we were only masters of the Zurichberg, on the right bank of the Limmat; the

Russians, driven back into the town, intrenched themselves there.

“These men are of a different race to us; they hold on to the last; they must be destroyed, for they will not yield, and that is what we did conscientiously; and the next day there was as great a carnage in Zurich as there was at Mans.

“This stupid race thought they could escape by one gate while we were forcing another; the infantry led. Korsakoff had left his cavalry in the town. Two divisions waited their sortie with loaded cannon. The Russian infantry forced their way through a storm of balls and grape, uttering savage cries which were heard on both lakes; their cavalry, artillery, military chest, and baggage remained in our hands. A corps belonging to Condé was cut to pieces; our seigneurs begged for quarter—a bayonet thrust was the reply. No truce between us and them; no mercy; conquer or die! that is all we confess to. A few of them escaped. The town is half destroyed; it had fired on our flags of truce; our brigade has remained in position since yesterday; the battery has lost two lieutenants. I am proposed for a commission by Sébastien Foy. I am sure to be named, but it makes no difference, for my age entitles me to my discharge, and as soon as the campaign is over, unless the country is in fresh danger, I shall return to my village.

“Mortier’s division, Soult’s division, and two other divisions, under the commander-in-chief, have marched to meet Saint-Nicolas Souvaroff, who is coming by the Saint-Gothard to take the command of the armies we have just beaten, and march upon Paris. I hope they will give him a warm reception, and that you will soon

have more news. And now, my dear Michel, I embrace you and little Jean-Pierre, the citoyenne Margaret, Citizen Chauvel, and you, my old comrade, with all my heart, and I say health and fraternity to all friends and patriots there with you.

“JEAN-BAPTISTE SÔME.”

Sôme's letter filled us with enthusiasm; Chauvel especially, who had been in a depressed state for some time, recovered all his former energy. He hurried off to the town-hall to read it to the authorities, and then he sent for the Jacobins, Maître Jean, Eloff, Manque, Genti, &c., and that evening we rejoiced over it till past ten.





CHAPTER XV.



FEW days later the Paris journals brought us all the news subsequent to the battle of Zurich; Souvaroff's passage of the Saint-Gothard; Gudin's retreat; the defence of the Pont du Diable, Urséren, Wäsen, and Amsteig by Lecourbe; Souvaroff's surprise in the environs of Altorf, when he heard that the armies commanded by Korsakoff, Hotze, and Jellachich were in full retreat; his fury when he found himself surrounded by our divisions; his horrible retreat across the Schachenthal and the Muttenthal, harassed by our troops among glaciers and dreadful passes, strewn with his dead and wounded; his miserable arrival at last at Coire; then Korsakoff's last defeat between Trüllikon and the Rhine, which had obliged him to cross the bridges of Constance and Diesenhofen in order to take refuge in Germany. Eighteen thousand prisoners, of whom eight thousand were wounded, whom the Russians had been obliged to abandon, one hundred cannon, thirteen stand of colours, four generals prisoners, five generals killed, among them the commander-in-chief Hotze, the retaking of

the Saint-Gothard and Glaris—all this showed the affair had been decisive.

The same gazettes mentioned a great victory gained by General Brune over the Anglo-Russians at Kas-trikum, in Holland. The Republic had, therefore, little to fear from its enemies. What made Chauvel laugh was to read two short lines in the same papers announcing the disembarkation of General Bonaparte, at Fréjus, on the 17th, on his return from Egypt.

“Ah!” said he, “he has missed his blow; he was coming back to save us; the Republic now stands in no need of him. How annoyed he must be! And now I hope they will make him give an account of what he has done; for when you have been trusted by your country with its finest fleet, thirty-five thousand veteran troops, guns, ammunition, and an immense war material, it is something beyond a joke to come back with your hands in your pockets and say, ‘They are all down there, go and see for yourself.’ This abominable and unexampled conduct must open the people’s eyes; the fathers and mothers of the thirty-five thousand men he has deserted will ask him, ‘What have you done with our children? Where are they? Since you are here again safe and sound, you who ought to have brought them back with you, and who promised them each a strip of land on their return from the expedition, we may well hope you have not got yourself out of the scrape by leaving them in the midst of the desert?’ Yes, that cannot fail to happen. Our Directors and the two councils, cowards as they are, and low as we may believe they have fallen, must speak out.”

To tell the truth, my father-in-law was not far wrong. Bonaparte himself said later that if Kléber had re-

turned from Egypt without orders he would have had him arrested at Marseilles, tried by a council of war, and shot within twenty-four hours. And yet Kléber had charge of nothing, he had undertaken no responsibility; Bonaparte only, without acquainting him with his intended departure, had found it convenient to shift the whole affair on his shoulders, knowing very well that Kléber had too much goodness of heart to refuse what help his courage could afford to so many poor devils abandoned to their own resources. And this is the man Bonaparte would have shot! He says so himself. Judge, then, for yourselves how selfish, unjust, yes, and ferocious was such a man. Did he arrogate to himself any greater right to desert his army than Kléber had? No, but he was well aware that there was not another man in all France capable of such barbarity and such dishonesty as himself, and therein lay all the secret of his power, from first to last.

Chauvel thought they would at least insist on some explanation. Alas! the very day after this splendid Zurich campaign, where Masséna had just saved France, the very day his report arrived—plain and true, and not crammed with exaggeration, as so many others were—that very day the gazettes would only talk of Bonaparte. Ah! while he was absent his brothers Joseph, Louis, and Lucien had not allowed enthusiasm to cool; the papers and advertisements continued their task; we read everywhere, “General Bonaparte arrived at Fréjus on the 17th, accompanied by Generals Berthier, Lannes, Marmont, Murat, Andréossy, and the citizens Monge and Berthollet; he was received by an immense crowd of people to the cry of ‘Vive la Ré-

publique !' He has left the army of Egypt in a most satisfactory condition.

"It is not possible to describe the joy which was felt when these news were made public in the theatres yesterday. Cries of 'Vive la République ! Vive Bonaparte !' tumultuous applause several times repeated, were heard in all directions. Every one was drunk with joy. Victory, which always accompanies Bonaparte, had outstripped him this time" (perhaps it was he who won the battle of Zurich and drove the English and Russians out of Holland !) "and he is now come in time to strike the last blow at the expiring coalition. Ah ! Mr. Pitt, what terrible news to add to the total of the Anglo-Russian army in Holland ! The arrival of Bonaparte is worse news for you than the loss of three more battles !"

And then in one line—

"General Moreau has arrived in Paris."

He did not return from Egypt, it is true, nor had he abandoned his army ; he had devoted himself in Italy to repair the faults of others ; he was no actor, and the French like actors.

The next day—

"General Bonaparte left his carriage at his own house, Rue de la Victoire, Chaussée-d'Antin, yesterday. He will be received to-day by the Executive Directory."

And again—

"Bonaparte went to the Executive Directory yesterday at half-past one. The courts and halls were filled with people anxious to see the man whose death had been announced by the guns of the Tower of London more than a year ago. He shook hands with several

soldiers who had served with him in Italy. He wore a great-coat without uniform, and a scimitar attached to a silk cord. He wears his hair cut short. The climate in which he has lived for more than a year has given more tone to his face, which was naturally pale. When he quitted the Directôry he visited several ministers, among others the Minister of Justice."

And then—

"Lucien Bonaparte has been elected President of the Five Hundred; his secretaries are Dillon, Fabry, Barras (des Ardennes), and Desprez (de l'Orne)."

And then—

"General Bonaparte dined yesterday with Gohier, President of the Directory. It was remarked that he asked questions rather than conversed. He was asked what struck the Egyptians the most of all the inventions we had carried there. He replied that it was to see us eat and drink at the same time."

So it went on from the 22nd Vendémiaire to the 18th Brumaire. All this time not the least notice was taken either of Masséna or Souwaroff, nor of the Anglo-Russians. The papers were all full from top to bottom of the victories of Chebreiss, the Pyramids, Sédiman, Thèbes, Beyrouth, Mont-Thabor, of the Syrian expedition, of the last battle of Aboukir, the proclamations of Bonaparte, Member of the National Institute, General-in-Chief, &c., &c.!

All of which had produced us nothing.

But not a word of the destruction of our fleet, the horrible pillage of Jaffa, the massacre of the prisoners and inhabitants of that unhappy town, the exhaustion of our army, of its decimation by the plague, or of the dangers to which it was exposed both from the sea and

the desert. There is no help for it ; the whole affair is a comedy—a perpetual comedy. Besides that the ignorance and frightful stupidity of the people ; the meanness of the public press, which sells itself to fawn upon and glorify any one who will pay it ; the cowardice of the crowd, which cannot exist without a master ; the selfishness of those who want a share of the spoil, call it chance, good fortune, genius, or what you will—all these causes combined are the reason why nations fall a prey to cunning and cruel men, who despise them and kick and cuff them at their pleasure.

The nation's enthusiasm increased daily. At last, just one month after Bonaparte's return, we read in the *Moniteur*—

*Bonaparte, General-in-Chief, to the citizens forming the
sedentary guard of Paris.*

*“ Brumaire 18, Year VIII. of the Republic
one and indivisible.*

“ Citizens !—The Council of the Ancients, the repository of national wisdom, has passed the following decree, which it is empowered to do by the 102nd and 103rd Articles of the Constitutional Act :—

“ Art. I. The Legislative Body is transferred to the Commune of Saint-Cloud ; the two councils will hold their sittings there, in the two wings of the palace.

“ Art. II. They will meet there to-morrow, the 19th Brumaire, at mid-day. All continuation of their deliberative functions elsewhere and before that time is forbidden.

“ Art. III. General Bonaparte is charged with the execution of the present decree. He will take all measures necessary for the security of the national

representation. The general in command of the 17th Military Division" (it was then Lefèvre), "the Guard of the Legislative Body, the Sédentary National Guards, the troops of the line now in Paris, in the constitutional arrondissements, and throughout the whole extent of the 17th Division, are placed under his immediate orders, and are held to acknowledge him as such. All citizens will give him their active assistance when called upon.

"Art. IV. General Bonaparte is called to the Council to receive a copy of the present decree and to take the oath." (To what?) "He will make his arrangements with the Commission of Inspectors of the two Councils.

"Art. V. The present decree will be immediately transmitted by a message to the Council of Five Hundred and the Executive Directory. It will be printed, placarded, promulgated, and despatched to all communes in the Republic by special couriers."

Bonaparte then went on:—

"The Council of Ancients has charged me with the necessary measures for the safety of the national representation. Its removal is necessary and momentary. The Legislative Body will find itself enabled to save the representation from the imminent danger into which the disorganisation of all departments of the administration is hurrying us. In these essential circumstances it has need of union and confidence on the part of all patriots. Rally, then, around it. It is the sole means of establishing the Republic on the basis of civil liberty, of domestic happiness, of victory, and of peace.

"Vive la République!

"BONAPARTE.

"A true copy.

"ALEXANDER BERTHIER."

Then followed a proclamation from Bonaparte to his soldiers :—

“Soldiers!—The extraordinary decree of the Council of Ancients is in conformity with Articles 102 and 103 of the Constitutional Act. It has confided the command of the city and the army to my hands.

“I have accepted it to second the measures it is about to take, which are entirely in the people’s favour.

“For the last two years the Republic has been a prey to misgovernment. You have hoped that my return would put an end to so many evils. You have celebrated it with an unanimity which imposes on me the duties I am fulfilling. You will fulfil yours, and you will second your general with the energy, firmness, and confidence which I have always seen you show. Liberty, victory, and peace will set the Republic again in the rank which she once held in Europe, and which only incapacity or treachery could have caused her to lose.

“‘Vive la République!’

“BONAPARTE.”

It is impossible to depict men’s astonishment when they read these proclamations. We were then tranquil; the Republic had just gained two great victories at Zurich and at Kastrikum, in Holland; our enemies were depressed, and now, suddenly, without any reason whatever, Bonaparte declared the Republic had lost its position in Europe, and that he was going to establish it again in its former glory. This was so untrue that the most stupid among men saw the falseness of it; and then this removal of the two Councils to the village of Saint-Cloud to put them into the hands of the military, without defence, seemed nothing but treachery. This

forced cries of indignation from the patriots ; they all believed the Parisians would rise ; they came into the library one after the other, exclaiming—

“ Well, things are getting warm in Paris ! ”

But Chauvel, who was walking up and down the room, replied, with a bitter smile—

“ Paris is quiet enough. Paris looks on while Bonaparte’s staff rides by. What should the Parisians rise for, while we remain musing quietly here, and they shout ‘ Vive Bonaparte ! ’ in the streets ? For whom and for what should they get their heads broken ? To preserve their constitution of the Year III., which deprives them of their political rights ? to maintain a handful of intriguers in the places to which they appointed themselves ? No, I will just explain the present state of things. The present affair is between the bourgeois and the military. I have seen it coming for a long time ; it began the 13th Vendémiaire, it has lasted to the 18th Fructidor. The army at bottom will always be on the side of the people, it springs from the people ; those who support the people’s interests will always have the army with them ; that is why the Convention, notwithstanding the frightful necessities of the time, was always able to reckon on the soldiers, even against their generals. No general could have led his men against the Republic, for they themselves, their families, their relations, their friends, the whole nation, were the Republic. But the old Girondins and their friends of the plain having come to an understanding to bring about the events of the 9th Thermidor, then the separation between the interests of the people and of the bourgeois began ; the Constitution of the Year III. has confirmed it ; since then, from day to day it has been dying away.

The Republic is no longer one and indivisible: it is divided; the bourgeoisie has its interests, the people have theirs; between the two stands the army, and it is the army which will give the law to both. The opportunity only was wanted; our Director Sieyès has just found it; for the last six months he has been inventing a Jacobin conspiracy against the Republic. This man, the vainest I ever knew, detests the people, because the people expect ideas which are plain, and not chimerical, like those of the Abbé Sieyès, which it hates; it let the Abbé Sieyès remain in his hiding-place without inquiring about him, or asking, as the bourgeois of the Constituent Assembly did, 'What is to be done, M. l'Abbé?' or 'What do you think of our conduct, M. l'Abbé?' If you do not speak, M. l'Abbé, we shall get into a dilemma!' The people and its representatives let him dream in peace. They have done great things without him and in spite of him, for by his face you saw this man disapproved of everything; but he was sufficiently prudent to remain silent.

"In later days he found his friends again in the Council of Ancients; they had lived in fear together; more than once they had trembled together; this rendered them, so to say, brothers. The Constitution of the Year III. did not seem sufficiently monarchical for them, nor the Directors, Lareveillère, Rewbell, Barras, &c., sufficiently bourgeois; they struck their blow; Sieyès became Director; patriots' journals were seized, their proprietors, directors, and editors transported to Oléron; the clubs were closed, and the Jacobins prosecuted. For the last six months we have heard of nothing but terror and conspiracies against the Republic, for the sake of an excuse for arresting men they feared. This

is not enough. Sieyès has a definite Constitution for our Republic in his pocket; and as it does not square with every one's ideas, as the people might reject it, it was necessary that Sieyès should have a general at his disposal to bring the people to a proper way of thinking, if they should rise. He has sounded Moreau and Bernadotte; he chose Joubert, but Joubert fell at Novi. Now that Bonaparte is returned from Egypt, he embraces Sieyès' Constitution; he defends it against every one; Sieyès and his friends in the Council of Five Hundred ask no more; they surrender the two councils to Bonaparte, by transferring them to Saint-Cloud; they give Bonaparte the command of the troops, in opposition to the Constitution. We shall see the rest of the affair to-morrow. I fancy, if it succeeds, Bonaparte and the soldiers will expect to have their share of the government; the bourgeois will not have it all."

Chauvel was indignant at this trick, which he had foreseen, but which was played at a time when the Republic was in such a healthy state that one would have believed such rascalities impossible. I think, even now, that without the Abbé Sieyès, Bonaparte, with all his audacity, would not have ventured to strike the blow. Sieyès had prepared it, and Bonaparte put it in execution.

The next day we had a crowd in our shop asking for the newspapers; they were all carried off in a few minutes. We were in the library with ten or twelve friends and relations, reading the account of this famous sitting of the Five Hundred in the Orangery at Saint-Cloud, the 19th Brumaire, under the presidency of Lucien Bonaparte.

I was reading it aloud.

"The sitting was opened at half-past one in the Orangery at Saint-Cloud, in the left wing of the palace, by the reading of the minutes of the last sitting.

"Gaudin—'Citizens, a decree of the Council of Ancients has transferred the sitting of the Legislative Body to this Commune. Some imminent danger must be assigned as the motive for this extraordinary measure. In fact, it is asserted that powerful factions have threatened to destroy us; that they must be deprived of the hope of overthrowing the Republic, and restore peace to France,' " &c.

Gaudin went on in this strain, and concluded by requiring a commission should be named to make a report on the situation of the Republic, and what measures of public safety should be taken under the circumstances. He was interrupted.

"Delbrel—'The Constitution first!'

"Grandmaison—'I claim a right to speak!'

"Delbrel—'The Constitution or death! We are not afraid of bayonets; here we are free!'

"Several voices—'No dictatorship! Down with dictators!'

"Cries of 'Vive la Constitution!' began to be heard.

"Delbrel—'I demand that the oath to the Constitution be again taken.' "

Cheering began again. A crowd of members rushed to the tribune. Cries of 'Down with dictators!' recommence.

"The President, Lucien Bonaparte—'I feel too acutely for the dignity of the Council to allow the insolent threats of part of the speakers to continue. I call them to order.'

"Grandmaison—'Representatives, France will not

see without astonishment that the national representation and the Council of Five Hundred, yielding to a Constitutional decree of the Council of Ancients, has betaken itself to this new locality without being instructed what the danger which threatens us—imminent no doubt—really is. It is suggested to name a commission to propose measures to be taken; it would be better to propose one to know what has been done.’”

He finished by exclaiming—

“‘French blood has been flowing for the last ten years for liberty’s sake, and I ask that we all swear to oppose the re-establishment of every tyranny whatsoever.’”

“A number of voices—‘Seconded! seconded! Vive la République! Vive la Constitution!’”

This oath was taken, and Bigonnet said — “The oath which you have just taken once more will have its place in history’s pages; it may be compared with the celebrated oath taken by the Constituent Assembly in the Tennis Court—with this difference only, that then the national representation was in search of an asylum against the bayonets of royal authority, and that here the arms which have been in the service of liberty are in Republican hands.”

“A number of voices—‘Yes! yes!’”

“Bigonnet—‘But the oath would be a delusion if we did not send a message to the Council of Ancients to demand information of the motives of the extraordinary summons which has brought us here.’”

The sitting was continued during great agitation, and a message was sent to the Directory; then came the letter from Barras, resigning his post as Director. This wretch said—

“‘Citizen representatives—Having taken a part in

public affairs solely because of my love of liberty, I only consented to accept the office of chief magistrate of the State to support it when in peril, &c. The glory which accompanies the return of the illustrious general to whom I had the good fortune to throw open the road to glory, the striking marks of confidence which the Legislative Body has bestowed on him, and the decree of the national representation, have convinced me that whatever be the post to which public interest may in future call me, the dangers to liberty are now surmounted, and the interests of our armies guaranteed,' " &c.

This rogue seemed to laugh at the unfortunate representatives, surrounded as they were by cannon and sabres, and far removed from all assistance.

It seems these lengthy deliberations fatigued Bonaparte; there is no doubt he had his spies in the hall, who reported to him what was said there, for at the moment that the representative Grandmaison was observing that Barras' resignation did not seem a voluntary act, that it might have been extorted from him, suddenly there was a great commotion, and all eyes were turned to the grand entrance, where General Bonaparte showed himself, four grenadiers belonging to the representatives behind him, and farther back officers of the staff, listening attentively. Then the whole assembly, indignant at seeing this soldier violate the national precincts, rose and exclaimed—

“ ‘How is this? how is this? Swords here! Armed men!’ ”

Many members rushed from their seats; they took Bonaparte by the collar and thrust him out. A number of members standing up in their seats called out—

“ ‘Outlaw him! outlaw him!’ ”

This terrible cry, which had made Robespierre tremble, made this man grow pale too. It is said he fell back fainting into his officers' arms. But the big Lefèvre, whom I have seen since then, a mere trooper, a native of Rouffach, in Alsace, and who only listened to orders, hurried into the hall calling out, "Save the general!" and he carried him off.

Imagine the disturbance there was. The president, Lucien Bonaparte, called for silence, and cried out, terrified because he felt how infamous was his brother's conduct—

"The commotion which has just taken place proves that every one feels as I do. It was natural, however, to think the step the general took was only for the purpose of giving an account of the state of affairs, or else something of interest in the present situation. But I believe that in no case any of you can suspect——"

"A member—'This day Bonaparte has tarnished his glory.'"

"Another member—'Bonaparte has acted as a king.'"

"Another—'I demand that General Bonaparte be brought to the bar to give an account of his conduct.'"

"Lucien Bonaparte—'I ask leave to quit the chair.'"

"Chazal takes the chair.

"Digneffe—'Since the Council of Ancients has assumed the constitutional right of the Legislative Body, it had, doubtless, powerful motives for so doing. I ask, therefore, that we may be told who are the chiefs and agents in the conspiracy which threatens us. Above all I ask you to take measures for your security; to determine how far the police of your precincts extends.'"

"A number of voices—'Right!'"

"Bertrand (du Calvados)—'When the Council of Ancients authorised the transfer of the Legislative Body to this Commune, it had a constitutional right to do so; when it named a commander-in-chief it exercised a right which it did not possess. I demand that you begin by declaring that General Bonaparte has not the command of the grenadiers who form your guard.'

"A number of voices—'Right! right!'

"Talot—'The Council of Ancients had no right to name a general, nor has Bonaparte the right to enter these precincts without being sent for. As for you, you cannot remain longer in such a position—you ought to return to Paris. March thither in your robes, and your return there will be protected by citizens and by soldiers; you see by the attitude of the military that they are defenders of their country. I ask that you instantly decree that the troops actually present in this Commune form part of your guard. I ask that you send a message to the Council of Ancients to desire them to pass the decree which sends you back to Paris.'

"Destrem—'I support Talot's motion.'

"Blin—'Six thousand men are around you. Declare that they form part of the guard of the Legislative Body.'

"Delbrel—'With the exception of the General of the Directory, President, put this proposition to the vote.'"

The vote was loudly demanded.

"Lucien Bonaparte—'I do not oppose the motion; but I must observe that it seems suspicion arises here with great rapidity and little foundation—has a step, however irregular, already caused forgetfulness of so many services rendered to liberty?'

“Voices—‘No, no, they will not be forgotten.’

“Lucien Bonaparte—‘I ask you, call in the general before taking such a step.’

“Many voices—‘We do not acknowledge him.’

“Lucien Bonaparte—‘I do not press it. When calm reigns again in these precincts, when the extraordinary inpropriety now displayed is appeased, when the passions are silent, then you will render justice to whom it is due.’

“A number of voices—‘To the point! to the point!’

“Lucien Bonaparte—‘I give up being listened to; and having no longer power to enforce it, I declare that I hereby lay on the tribune the tokens of the popular magistracy.’

“Lucien Bonaparte, without his robes, descends from the tribune. A squad of grenadiers belonging to the Legislative Body enters. An officer of the corps is at its head. The picket goes up to the tribune, surrounds Lucien Bonaparte, and escorts him out of the hall.”

This was a very successful ambushade. When lying and trickery are not sufficient, when men will not allow themselves to be deceived, then they have recourse to violence.

“The storm breaks forth, amidst cries of fury and indignation; the steps of the soldiery are heard on the stairs leading to the hall. The spectators rush to the windows. The representatives of the people are standing up, and cry, ‘Vive la République!’ Grenadiers, carrying arms, invade the temple of the laws, with General Leclerc at their head.

“General Leclerc, raising his voice—‘Citizen representatives, we do not answer for the safety of the Council; I invite you to retire.’

“Cries of ‘Vive la République!’ recommence. An officer of the grenadiers of the Legislative Body ascends the president’s desk.

“‘Representatives!’ he cries, ‘retire; the general has given orders to that effect.’

“A most violent tumult reigns. The representatives keep their places. An officer calls out, ‘Grenadiers! forward!’ The drum beats to arms; the corps of grenadiers takes up a position in the middle of the hall; General Leclerc gives the order to clear the hall, and it is put in execution amidst the beating of drums to drown the cries of indignation and protestations of the deputies.”

I know some authors of that time who praised these transactions up to the skies, and others whom Bonaparte caused to be arrested and taken to prison like thieves the same night—and, to speak frankly, they richly deserved it. When people are taught to respect and admire violence and artifice, when no one is to be found to say a word to give heart to honest men and to brand a crime, then let them apply their own lessons to themselves; it will strengthen the principles of those who believe that Justice is eternal, and she sometimes shows herself to be so in this world.

As for the concluding events of this 19th Brumaire, you are already aware that the majority of the Ancients, gained over by Sieyès, were parties to the plot. They sat trembling in the left wing of the palace. Bonaparte went there and made them a speech, such as he used to address to his soldiers, that very morning, telling them a conspiracy was in existence, that the Council of Five Hundred was about to re-establish the Convention and the scaffolds, that the Directors Barras and Moulin

had been to him with a proposal to overthrow the Government." They asked him for proofs of what he asserted; he had none; he stammered and grew angry. Then he turned to the soldiers standing at the doors, and cried—

"My brave soldiers, I depend upon you. I can see your caps and your bayonets from here. You, my brave friends, whom I have led to victory, you will not abandon me."

And so on. How the Ancients must have repented having delivered the two councils and the nation into the hands of this wretch! But it was too late.

While the Five Hundred, turned out of their hall, were hastening to Paris to rouse the people if it were possible, five or six and twenty traitors, who had remained behind, returned to the hall at night, under the presidency of Lucien Bonaparte, the accomplice of the other, and passed that famous decree by which the Directory was suppressed, sixty-one members of the Five Hundred expelled the Council, the executive powers entrusted to Sieyès, Roger-Ducos, and Bonaparte (the general) under the name of Consuls, the Legislative Body adjourned for three months, and two legislative commissions of twenty-five members charged to attend to the police, and to revise the Constitution.

The Ancients, declaring their sittings permanent, approved of all—that was a matter of course—and as Chauvel had foretold, the people not having stirred, having no interest in the fate of the Constitution of the Year III., the nation was consequently taken possession of by the Bonapartes for sixteen years; and there they would be probably now had it not been for the Germans, the English, and the Russians! Yes; let us

at last have the courage to tell the truth. If all Europe, which had been plundered and put to ransom by him, had not risen against this man; the ancien régime, re-established in all its essentials for the profit of the Bonaparte family, with its clergy, its nobility, its entailed estates, its privileges, and its despotism, would still weigh our unhappy country down.

Then, if the bourgeois still possessed a glimmering of good sense, they must have comprehended that cleverness, finesse, and selfishness are not everything, and that their Constitution would have had thousands to take its part if they had had a little more justice, and given a fair share of it to the people. But as they had chosen to seize upon and keep everything for themselves, they must also defend it when they got it. Bonaparte was sure to have the people with him when he cried, "That he came to re-establish the people's rights," and throw the lawyers into the river; that is only common sense; every man for himself, and God for us all. The bourgeois had set the example, the people followed it.

Now we were about to experience a military government.





CHAPTER XVI.



LL the generals present in Paris were implicated in the coup-d'état; Moreau had lowered himself to guarding Gohier and Moulin, the only two right-minded men in the Directory, prisoners in the Luxembourg Palace; they were the only two who refused to resign, and retired with a strong protest against these disgraceful proceedings.

The next day Bonaparte and his wife left their small house in the Rue de la Victoire to take up their abode in the Luxembourg Palace. The consuls published an address to the nation, and Bonaparte one to the army; the soldiers had wine given them, they sang and they shouted "Vive Bonaparte!" the people at Phalsbourg followed their example, and there was in that one day a greater consumption of beer and sausages than there had been for months before. The patriots never stirred; when the people and the soldiery make common cause they would only remain quiet. Both civil and military authorities have their orders, and in a small town like ours, the mayor, his deputies, the town clerk, or the

er of the gendarmerie come and give one notice privately. We received such a notice; Chauvel did not require it—he knew all about Bonaparte.

The gazettes were filled with declarations of adhesion to government, compliments, congratulations, and protestations of loyalty; even Brune, an old friend of Danton, and who was indebted to him for his first promotion, the conqueror of the Duke of York in Holland, sent his submission to the great man.

Masséna said nothing; he had sown and the other had reaped; he must have been disgusted with the people's ingratitude. Bonaparte, not desirous of having him so near Paris at the head of the victors at Zurich, sent him to command in Italy; Bernadotte was silent when he saw how the attempt had succeeded; Championnet exclaimed, "Victory!" and Augereau had never been so devoted to Bonaparte.

But the list of those who were to be sent to Cayenne and to the Isle de Ré marked all honest men—a list in which brigands and bandits, described for a long time as such, were mixed up with members of the Five Hundred and patriots like Jourdan, the saviour of France at Fleurus and Wattignies.

Then Bonaparte's meanness was fully shown. It seems he was aware of the horror people had expressed on the subject, and he understood that if he went too far the lower classes might revolt; so immediately afterwards we saw in the gazettes that it was not Jean-Baptiste Jourdan, the general, who was mentioned in the list, but Matthew Jourdan, called Coupe-tête, the assassin of the Guillotière, who had died years before. This insult offered to one of the most respectable citizens gave every one pain.

The two commissions continued their labours at Paris, that of the Five Hundred under Lucien Bonaparte, that of the Ancients under Lebrun. They abolished the law relating to hostages, established a war tax of twenty-five centimes in the franc instead of a forced loan; they proclaimed a definite standard of weights and measures, which was a great benefit to commerce; they arranged the laws already passed for our civil code, and then they each appointed their commission charged with drawing up the plan of a Constitution. This is what was impatiently looked for, for we could not continue to live in our present state, at the knee of one man; we should have been worse than serfs. We believed the new Constitution would restore our rights, since they had all been abolished, even those of the Constitution of the Year III. Chauvel alone laughed when they talked about fresh Constitutions; he shrugged his shoulders; that meant a great deal, and made one despair. At last we learnt what this magnificent Constitution was which Sieyès had been carrying about in his head for the last five years. Some of Mirecourt's caricatures, of which we sold a great many just then, represented it under the form of an Egyptian pyramid. On the top was the Grand Elector for life, seated in an arm-chair, named by the Senate, which was seated at the bottom. This Grand Elector was to receive six millions a year; he was to have a guard of three thousand men, and live in the palace at Versailles like Louis XVI. That was the prominent feature of this Constitution. The Grand Elector's sole duty was to name two consuls, one for peace, and the other for war, and then to look down and see what was going on. On the right of the pyramid the Legislative Body was

seated, on the left the Tribunate, and the State Council facing the Grand Elector. The Tribunate and the State Council disagreed about the laws, the Legislative Body listened, and pronounced judgment. As for the people, it was represented by a mayor drawing up lists, a messenger carrying them away, and a peasant who put them in a box. This caricature made all those who saw it laugh. It was said that Bonaparte enjoyed it, and said to Sieyès—

“Ah, ha ! do you believe the nation would be pleased to see a dirty fellow spending six millions at Versailles for doing nothing ? and besides, do you know any one degraded enough to accept such a position ?”

M. l'Abbé was at a loss for an answer ; he knew the Grand Elector very well. It seems, however, that Bonaparte found there was some good in Sieyès' Constitution, for on the 13th of December, 1799, the new Constitution having been published, we saw that the Senate, the Legislative Body, the Tribunate, and the Council of State, and even the Grand Elector, were there ; but this Grand Elector, instead of doing nothing, did everything ; he was called the First Consul, and added two others to himself for form's sake.

“The government is entrusted to three Consuls appointed for ten years, and re-eligible for an indefinite time. The Constitution appoints Citizen Bonaparte First Consul, late Provisional Consul ; Citizen Cambacérès, Second Consul, late Minister of Justice ; Citizen Lebrun, Third Consul, late member of the Commission of Ancients.

“The First Consul has especially duties and attributes, in which he can be, for the moment, replaced, when necessary, by one of his colleagues.

"The First Consul promulgates the laws. He appoints or dismisses, at will, members of the Council of State, ambassadors, and other principal foreign agents abroad; officers of the naval and military services, members of local administrations, and government commissaires belonging to the tribunals: he appoints judges in civil and criminal courts, besides magistrates and judges of the court of appeal, without the power of dismissing them.

"The Government brings laws forward, and takes the steps necessary to put them in execution; it directs the receipts and the expenditure of the State; it controls the coinage. If it is informed that any conspiracy against the State is meditated, it is authorised to issue summonses and warrants of arrest. It provides for the safety of the State, both at home and abroad; it regulates the distribution of land and sea forces. It entertains diplomatic relations, conducts negotiations, makes preliminary conditions, signs, causes treaties of peace, of alliance, of truce, of neutrality, of commerce, and other agreements to be signed and concluded. The Council of State, under the direction of the consuls, is charged with drawing up projects of laws, and rules of public administration, and to settle what difficulties may arise therein."

What was there left for the rest of us after this, let me ask, and what security had we! Who was there to oppose the will of the First Consul—who? He had done everything, appointed every one, from the highest to the lowest; senators to maintain or annul unconstitutional acts; Councillors of State to defend the laws he has planned; and by his Constitution he intended to continue to do everything, appoint everything, and

decide everything, for his Legislative Council was only a farce. Just listen a moment:—

“The citizens of every communal *arrondissement* will point out those from among themselves they consider most fit for conducting public affairs (one in ten). The citizens included in these communal lists will, in the same manner, fix upon one tenth man from among themselves; the result will be a second departmental list. The citizens on the departmental list will, in the same way, nominate a tenth citizen from their number, which will form a third list.”

Perhaps you expect that these last have the power of electing deputies? Not at all:—“These last are eligible for public office in the national service.”

“All the lists drawn up in the departments in virtue of Article 9 (the last) will be addressed to the Senate; the Senate chooses legislators, tribunes, consuls, judges of appeal, and commissioners of accounts from these lists.”

And the Senate—who named it? The consuls! I need go no further; what I have said is enough to show you how we were fallen; the First Consul did everything, and the people nothing. As to the discussions between the tribunes and the Council of State relative to bringing laws forward, it was only a piece of machinery set up to make us believe we had a government, and that we had the power of discussing questions affecting our own interests; these attacked the project, those always defended it, just as a Punch at a fair kicks Judy, who puts up with it, and makes faces; and one laughs at such folly in spite of oneself. However, it seemed that the First Consul was jealous of his theatre, for several papers having allowed themselves to

put some of the farces between the tribunes and the Council of State in action, and to discuss his projects among themselves, one fine morning we read in the *Moniteur* :—

“Decreed, the 27 Nivôse.—The consuls of the Republic, considering that a part of the newspapers printed in the department of the Seine are instruments in the hands of the Republic's enemies ; that the government is especially charged by the French nation with the care of its safety, decrees as follows:—

“Art. I. The Minister of Police, during the war, will not allow the newspapers named herein to be printed, published, or distributed : — The *Moniteur Universel*, the *Journal des Débats and des Décrets*, the *Journal de Paris*, the *Bien Informé*, the *Ami des Lois*, the *Clef des Cabinets*, the *Citoyen Français*, the *Gazette de France*, the *Journal des Hommes Libres*, the *Journal du Soir*, the *Journal des Défenseurs de la Patrie*, the *Décade Philosophique*.”

Altogether thirteen papers ; and as we were always at war the prohibition would never end. After that you may understand to what degree of degradation, stupidity, and ignorance the nation was soon reduced ; the more so that, during the whole of his reign, Bonaparte never gave a centime towards primary instruction, and only took an interest in the lycées and higher schools for the bourgeoisie and the nobility. But, on the other hand, numbers of persons hitherto forgotten came to the surface—*ci-devant* equerries, seigneurs, counts, viscounts, great ladies, court valets, gamekeepers, and clerks of the kitchen ; having at last some one to whom they could bow the knee, of which they had long felt the want. True, it was not their

legitimate king. Alas! he was a rough personage, certainly—a very insolent soldier of fortune; but he was the master, and they hurried into his antechambers. They must serve some one—it is so pleasant to serve!

This sort of people Bonaparte liked. He received them well, and said the old nobility would be known by its fine manners anywhere; that one must have belonged to it from father to son to be at home there. But he was not at the Tuileries yet, and it was at the Tuileries he was ambitious of receiving them.

In the meanwhile, as the love of a man does not quite take the place of love of one's country, and as encouragement ought to be given to such as were on the right road by giving them some mark of distinction, the consuls of the Republic decreed that individuals who signalised themselves by any action of *éclat* should be distinguished—

1st. Muskets mounted in silver to grenadiers and other soldiers.

2nd. Drumsticks of honour, mounted in silver, to drummers.

3rd. Carbines of honour, mounted in silver, to brave cavalry soldiers.

4th. Silver trumpets of honour to trumpeters.

5th. A gold grenade on the facings of their coats to those artillerymen who were the best shots, and who in a battle rendered the greatest services. And every soldier who obtained one of the above rewards would be entitled to an increase of five centimes in his daily pay.

Thus everything was paid for just as in our shop—a pound of sugar, so much; an ounce of cinnamon, so much; a pint of vinegar, so much. The devotion of a

private soldier, so much ; of a lieutenant, so much ; of a captain, so much. You have been running the risk of losing your life—so much for the risk, and we are quits. As to your devotion, your sacrifices, don't talk to me about them ; whatever is bought and sold is but merchandise. Let us, therefore, put glory aside altogether. Glory was to be found under the Republic when Jourdan, Hoche, Kléber, and Marceau sacrificed themselves with thousands of others for liberty, equality, and fraternity. Yes, glory was their only recompense ! They asked neither for titles, nor decorations, nor great pensions, nor gratifications. But every time I hear glory talked about in connection with large profits, the idea comes into my head to propose to the municipal council of Phalsbourg to erect a statue in my honour for having supplied my countrymen pepper, ginger, cloves, and other colonial produce, in exchange for their ready money in coin. I have been paid, it is true ; I became a grocer to better myself—true again ; but the moment the military career produces as large profits, or more, than any description of groceries, I do not see why Michel Bastien, principal grocer in his commune, should not have his statue quite as well as George Mouton.

All this, you know, is only a joke ; glory is the result of devotion ! and Bonaparte reckoned so little on devotion, that he had never spoken but of national interest to his soldiers. “Soldiers, I am about to lead you into the most fertile plains in the world !” “Soldiers, on our return from this expedition every one of you shall have wherewithal to purchase six acres of land !” Now they need buy nothing, they were in the most fertile plains in the world : in France ! rich in grain, rich in forage,

rich in fruit, rich in good wine, rich in all sorts of produce ; and, above all, rich in conscripts. They had gained all the rights the nation had lost.

After having played against us, and won, Bonaparte was about to play against Europe, to give thrones to his brothers, the nation would be forced to find the stakes for him ; but as he had promised the country peace, and this promise had twice contributed to his elevation, he wrote in a familiar way to George III., King of England, saying the English and French ought to come to a good understanding in the interest of their commerce, their domestic prosperity, and the happiness of their families ; and that he wrote direct to him, without troubling himself about his ministers nor his Houses of Parliament, nor his other advisers, because those things were much more easily settled between principals, just as you exchange pinches of snuff.

King George was very much surprised to find himself tapped on the shoulder by a little Corsican private gentleman. He declined replying, saying, "To do so would be to violate the English Constitution." But his Prime Minister, Pitt, who had already done us a great deal of harm by subsidising the two first coalitions against us, and landing whole armies on our coasts, saw very well that Bonaparte was only in jest, by flattering the French with the hope of peace, for he himself wished the war to last ; he therefore answered in a note, which was posted up in every village in the country—

"That our Revolution attacked the whole world ; that it was contrary to all rights, to personal liberty, and to religion ; that his Majesty George III. could have no confidence either in our treaties for peace, or in

our promises; that he needed other guarantees; and the best guarantee for him would be the re-establishment of a race of princes, who for so many ages had known how to maintain the internal prosperity of the French nation, and the consideration and respect to which it is entitled abroad; that such an event would immediately and permanently remove all obstacles which could offer themselves to peace negotiations; that he would assure to France the undisputed enjoyment of her ancient territory, and give all other nations in Europe, by quiet and peaceful means, the security they were actually obliged to seek by other means," &c.

Which signified that King George and his ministers looked upon the existence of our Republic as the greatest danger that all the royal, princely, and noble families, who live at the expense of the populations of Europe, could run; they said to themselves—

"That Republic shall perish, or we shall perish! The sovereignty of the people, and the right divine of others, cannot exist side by side."

It was very true, and Bonaparte knew it. If the kings of Europe had consented to receive him in their family circle we should not have had to wait long for peace, and the end of our Republic also. But neither King George, nor Francis II., nor the Emperor Paul would hear his name mentioned. War was then inevitable.

The Republic had rejected all the attacks of royalty and held out its hand to the people. It had extended the knowledge of the rights of man even as far as Russia, and made despots tremble in their own palaces. I am sure that in the end nations would have loved it and understood it. Our last victories, while our best army

and nearly all our best generals were in Egypt, proved that we had still strength and vigour enough for twenty years to come, and during these twenty years the spirit of liberty, justice, and devotion to the human race would always have advanced.

Since the advent of Bonaparte interest alone had the upper hand ; he wanted a place among crowned heads, and we were to win it for him. But, as Bonaparte was extremely cautious, he felt the struggle would be a long one, and wished first to prepare everything, and set not only his troops but the country in such order that he should have everything ready to his hand, be able to draw his resources from the remotest hamlets without hindrance, nor meet anywhere either with resistance or obstacles, and be able to pump up the life, the blood, and the money of the nation, down to the living rock.

It is to that we owe the famous territorial organisation of the 28th Pluviôse, Year VIII. (February 11, 1800), and the establishment of *préfectures* and *sous-préfectures*, which have been the admiration of so many writers, though they knew very well they could not assort with justice and the liberty of our country.

Prior to the Revolution we had provincial assemblies, composed of nobles and priests, to regulate the interests of the province and the taxes payable by each of us ; in later times, under the Constitutional Assembly and the Convention, we had municipal assemblies named by all citizens without exception, to regulate the affairs of the commune, and primary assemblies at the capital town of the district, for the election of deputies, judges, administrators, &c. Every one was satisfied ; we lived and took a part in the affairs of our parish, our town, our village, the department, and the whole pro-

vince. Poor citizens even received an indemnity to enable them to be present at the assemblies of their district.

Then by the Constitution of the Year III. we had primary assemblies, composed only of those who paid direct taxes. But, for all that, one was always attached to one's country's interest; and then there were municipal affairs; and it was in the municipal assemblies one learned to defend one's interests; all those who happened to be named to these assemblies only as simple members, or as municipal officers with some special duties, had it in their power to say—

“I represent my fellow-citizens. What I do is for myself, my friends, my native town, my native village.”

No stranger could interfere in either municipal or communal affairs. Robespierre was the first who sent municipal agents to the chief towns of all the departments as inspectors, but not in any way to interfere in what was not their business; provided the Republic had its dues, either in money or men, it required no more from it.

But that was not enough for Bonaparte: he found men were too free; that they were not sufficiently within his grasp; they paid too much attention to their own business; their own commune ought to be of less interest to them than himself; and that he ought to appoint, not their inspector, but their mayor, whose business it would be to do everything at home, instead of them; to receive orders from him and force the citizens to carry them out. We continued to name municipal councillors, it is true, but when the municipal council disagreed with the mayor, the representative of the First Consul, the municipal council was dis-

solved, and the mayor was found in the right under any circumstances.

This is what the new organisation called "the real administration." Above the mayor in rank was the sous-prefect, at the chief town of the arrondissement; for the territorial organisation had created three hundred and ninety-eight arrondissements, above the six or seven thousand cantons of the Republic; above the sous-prefect was the prefect, at the chief town of the department, all of whom were charged to see to the execution of the First Consul's wishes, to be themselves First Consuls of the commune, of the arrondissement, and of the department; to appoint whomsoever they thought proper to all duties, and to force any one to bend who felt inclined to resist.

If a citizen had occasion to complain of the lowest of their agents, he was unable to require reparation before a justice (Article 75 of the Constitution of the Year VIII.), but he must first address himself to the Council of the State, to obtain leave to do so; and as the First Consul named prefects, sous-prefects, and mayors, who in their turn appointed their police-agents, paid keepers, &c., the Council of State, named by the First Consul, seldom or never gave permission to prosecute them; so that it was better to remain at home and not stir out, or else when you went out take off your hat to every one, down to the lowest police spy, in continual dread of receiving a slap in the face, and of going to prison without any hope of obtaining redress if one had the misfortune to resent it.

The other parts of this organisation, which some writers have extolled as the chef-d'œuvre of human genius, were in the same spirit. Everything went back

to the First Consul ; he had all the glory and all the responsibility, and his responsibility could shelter itself under the name of the Council of State, of which every member was appointed by him, and revocable at his pleasure. Thus the nation existed but to furnish Bonaparte with men and money. Never had any nation fallen so low.





CHAPTER XVII.

AFTER creating this magnificent organisation, sweeping away a few handfuls of Bretons who revolted, and shooting their leaders, Bonaparte, quiet at home, gave the command of the armies of the Rhine and the Danube to Moreau.

At the same time he was assembling an army near Dijon with the greatest secrecy. The Austrians, who were the masters of Italy, were besieging Genoa, near our frontiers; and suddenly the First Consul, having collected sufficient troops, hurried to put himself at their head and crossed the Alps, as Souvaroff had done the year before, but with much less trouble, for the Saint-Gothard was defended, and he had to force his way, while the passage over the Saint-Bernard was open; he cut off the retreat of the Austrians and lost the battle of Marengo to Mélas, which was afterwards won by Desaix and Kellermann.

During this time Moreau had beaten the enemy, the 5th, 6th, 7th, and 8th of May, at Engen, Stokach, and

Moeskirsch, and made ten thousand prisoners; he took possession of Memmingen, routed the Austrians at Biberach on the 9th, and crossed the Danube only on the 22nd of June, having received orders from the First Consul not to advance too soon, but to give him time to descend into Italy and fall on the Austrians' rear. Moreau obeyed his orders. Then he beat Kray at Hochstædt, Neresheim, and Nordlingen, while Lecourbe, in command of the left wing, invaded the Vorarlberg, and made himself master of Feldkirch, and all the mountain line as far as the Valteline; but all these victories were put a stop to once more by the news of the preliminaries of Alexandria, just as were the successes of Hoche in '97 by the news of the preliminaries of Léoben. Bonaparte, the only great man in France, the only general of any importance, returned in triumph. Nothing we had ever seen till then by way of adoration, enthusiasm, platitudes either in actions or in words to flatter a man and exalt his vanity, could be compared to what was done, what was seen, and what was read in the gazettes.

Well, even all that did not satisfy the First Consul. When he saw men crouching at his feet and trying to render themselves contemptible by all the means in their power, the idea of former chamberlains, former masters of the ceremonies, ladies of honour for his wife, costumes embroidered in gold, valets in scarlet, in blue, and in green, covered with lace—all this masquerade seemed to him to be right and proper; besides, he had the émigrés close at hand. People who work hard are not always pleasant close to one, but these émigrés, crowding in the corridors and antechambers, were more agreeable; they had brought eau-de-Cologne of Jean-

Maria Farina back with them on purpose. He erased those men who had never ceased to fight against their country by thousands from the list, and also the refractory priests, and did not hesitate to say openly at the Council of State—

“With my prefects, my gendarmes, and my priests I can do what I like!”

It was quite true, he could do what he liked.

But these things are no business of mine now; the selfishness of a man who kills all grand ideas of liberty, equality, and humanity; who seeks my country's blood to raise himself and his family on the bones of two millions five hundred thousand Frenchmen; who seeks to establish among us again the customs and barbarous distinctions of a thousand years ago; who seeks to drive progress back, and who finishes by bringing upon us a twice-told invasion of Cossacks, English, and Germans—the life and glory of such a man are not a pleasing subject to me; I turn my eyes from it in sadness, and if it happens that I am again obliged to mention him in connection with what follows, I do it unwillingly.

Chauvel contemplated these occurrences with coolness; he looked down; his lips were tightly closed; he was almost always looking on the ground, as if he was having a bad dream. Sometimes he would exclaim—

“What a misfortune to live too long! If I had only died at Landau, when the cannon was thundering and we were singing, ‘Allons, enfans de la patrie!’”

His latest amusement was to carry the children about; we had then three, Jean-Pierre, Annette, and Michel. His delight was to examine Jean-Pierre in the catechism of the rights of man:—

“What is man, Jean-Pierre?”

“A free and reasoning being made for virtue.”

“That’s right; come here and let me kiss you.”

He would lean down to him, and then begin his restless marching up and down the room. My wife grieved to see her father so ill. The greatest of human sufferings is to ask oneself, “Is there any God?” Well, now, such were our thoughts then—for fifteen years all honest men have asked the same question, “Is there any God?” The more so that the clergy, the Pope, all those who have been established, as they assert, since the advent of Christ to guard and protect justice against barbarism, had just been on their knees before Bonaparte; they had established their religion; they prostrated themselves at Cæsar’s feet.

Thus the people of my day have seen what a Cæsar was, and what was a religion represented by priests whose only care was the good things of this world, and who sacrifice even the semblance of faith to them.

But the Supreme Being is there still, as the sun still shines upon us; the Supreme Being always sees His children; He smiles upon them, and says—

“Have no fear. Let not these things frighten you. I am the Eternal; liberty, equality, and fraternity are my law, and even when your bones become dust a breath from me will restore you to life. Fear nothing, then; those whom you dread will soon expiate their crimes; I see them, I judge them, and there is an end to all their power.”

The whole world wished for peace, the Austrians, perhaps, more than we did, for our outposts had extended to Lintz, and nothing now could prevent Moreau from marching on Vienna; there he would have dictated

terms of peace to the enemy ; but Moreau's entry into Vienna would have effaced the glory of Marengo. The First Consul signed the preliminaries on the 28th of July. He had been in too great a hurry ; the Emperor Francis II. had a secret treaty touching subsidies with England, and notwithstanding his dangerous position, he refused to ratify the preliminaries, and disavowed his agent in Paris as having exceeded his instructions.

Our generals, therefore, received orders to denounce the armistice, and the war was about to begin again, when the Austrians asked for an extension of forty-five days, which was granted on condition of ceding Ingolstadt, Ulm, and Philipsbourg. At the same time France and Austria sent their plenipotentiaries, Cobentzel and Joseph Bonaparte, to Lunéville, to try and come to terms and arrange a definitive treaty of peace. Some English were there also, but only to report.

This caused a revival of commerce with us, for these people live well ; they keep a good table, horses, and servants, and refuse themselves nothing which can content and please them.

The Congress dragged along all through the months of September and October, and part of November—no one here knew what passed. We sent them the finest trout in our rivers, game, the best wine in Alsace, until the moment the Austrians had refitted their armies. Then the English departed. Cobentzel, Joseph Bonaparte, and their people remained alone, and we were told that we were once more at war—Macdonald in the Grisons, Brune in Italy, Augereau on the Mein, Moreau in Bavaria.

It was frightfully cold, and there was snow, which

recalled La Vendée and our march from Savenay in '93. It was in November, fifteen days afterwards, the Archduke John and Moreau encountered one another at Hohenlinden, near the course of the Isaar in the Tyrolese Alps—in the midst of whirlwinds of snow. Sôme was there; some days afterwards he wrote me a letter, which I have lost, but which described the country and the battle as well as if we had seen it with our own eyes.

Moreau turned the enemy's position in an immense forest of beech and firs. He attacked them at the same time in front and rear, and routed them utterly. It was the last great victory of the Republic, won by Republicans, and that in which, perhaps, the genius of war was best displayed in all its terrible grandeur. Bonaparte was so jealous of it, that he always asserted Moreau did not know what he was about; that he had not given the order to Richepanse to turn the enemy's position, and that it was the effect of chance. If battles are won by chance, his own genius must have been of small account, for he has never shown anything else. His discoveries surely did not give him his chair in the Institute, I imagine; his idea of bringing us back to the days of Charlemagne and to universal monarchy was without common sense; nor his inventions of counts, dukes, barons, chamberlains, entailing estates—all these antiquated affairs, the reverse of equality, which he sought to pass off upon us as new, and which his sycophants represent as sublime inventions—they all fell flat to the ground as soon as his bayonets and sabres were no longer there to support them.

But all that did not prevent his reaping all the profit of the victory as usual.

After this great blow, Moreau passed the Inn, the Salza, and the Ens, collecting cannon, tumbrils, colours, and stragglers by thousands; he marched eighty leagues in twelve days, and found himself at the gates of Vienna, when the Archduke Charles, who had replaced the Archduke John in the command of the army, asked for an armistice. Moreau was not always talking about the ills of humanity, but he had some bowels of compassion for his soldiers; he did not put his own pride—which fools call glory—before everything; he was not thinking of putting his foot on the neck of an emperor or a prince, to make him cry for mercy. His campaign was finished; it freed every one in Italy, in the Alps, and in Germany. Instead of occupying Vienna, he granted the armistice, which was signed at Steyer the 25th of December, on condition that Austria would treat separately from England, that the fortresses in the Tyrol and Bavaria should be put into the hands of the French; and it was from the hands of Moreau that we had that long-wished-for peace so often promised us, which neither the boasted battles in Italy, nor the passage of the Saint-Bernard, nor the victory of Marengo, which has been related in twenty different ways by Bonaparte, had been able to assure us. Moreau showed us that decisive battles, on his own territory, strike the enemy as a stroke of thunder does a man's house, and not at a distance behind rivers or lines of mountains, which allow him time to recover himself, to collect his forces again, and to receive reinforcements.

Hohenlinden has been the model of all the great battles we have seen since—I do not mean in details, but in the general plan, as a whole, in its first idea, and that is the principal point. Moreau made war on

a grand scale, and others have tried to do the same thing when they went to Moscow; but in the best things there must always be a certain degree of moderation; good sense is the true rule of genius and its limit; when it is exceeded nothing but misfortune can happen.

After Hohenlinden, Cobentzel and Joseph Bonaparte, who had remained at Lunéville, had not much to say to one another: the First Consul made them understand he should keep the left branch of the Rhine, and Austria might keep the Adige, but she must give up all claim on Tuscany, and that she must indemnify the dispossessed princes on the left bank of the Rhine at the expense of the ecclesiastical princes of Germany.

When you are the weaker, you can only bend your shoulders to the yoke, which is what Cobentzel did, the more readily that the Emperor Paul had just declared for Bonaparte, who gave him back his island of Malta, and this dangerous maniac might fall upon Austria at any time.

But now I must tell you of a frightful circumstance which affected me, my family, and my friends more than all these old histories of wars and treaties, of which not a shade now remains in this world—a circumstance of which there are not many examples among people in barbarous times, when right, justice, tribunals, and judges only existed as dreams.

Since the 18th Brumaire, and the proclamation of the Constitution of the Year VIII., which conferred all the strength and all the rights of the nation on the First Consul, Chauvel, seeing the Republic was lost, remained quiet. He lived among ourselves without talking politics; our business was going on well, and

took up all our time, and drew our attention from thoughts which pained us. Maître Jean had declared for the new Constitution; he said the moment the people were secured in their possession of national property they had nothing more to ask; that order was the first thing to be established after this frightful Revolution; the rights of man would come some day.

He was growing old, and as Chauvel said some sharp things to him one evening about people becoming satisfied, he left off coming to see us.

"I am not angry with your father-in-law," he used to say sometimes, when he met me on the road to Baraques, or in the fields, "but he is a man with whom one cannot converse now; he is soured, and does not mind saying disagreeable things."

I thought—

"No; he happens to have told you the truth, and people who have no answer to make to that do not like it."

My father came to dine with us every Sunday; but he, poor man, thought all was right if his children were happy. Chauvel both loved and esteemed him, but never talked politics with him.

Stephen had been employed for some months in the house of Simonis, at Strasbourg; so we were living quite alone, taken up by our business. Even our old friends of the Egalité Club no longer came in the evening to talk by the fire; every one kept at home; and those who used to be the boldest, like Eloy Collin, were even more cautious than others.

And at the same time that we received Sôme's letter came the news of that famous infernal machine which nearly blew Bonaparte up on the 24th of December,

1800, at eight in the evening, in the Rue Saint-Nicaise.

The First Consul was driving from the Tuileries to the opera; a cart loaded with a large cask was in his way, and the coachman had hardly got out of its way at the corner of the street, when the barrel, which was full of gunpowder, exploded, killing and wounding fifty-two persons.

All the thirteen papers asserted unanimously that it was a blow struck by the Jacobins, so you may think it was an additional reason for remaining quiet.

One evening, the 17th of January—yes, it was that day—how one recollects everything one has suffered!—it is sixty-eight years since these events took place, and I see them distinctly now! There was a deep snow on the ground. After the day's work we were doing little odd jobs in the library; Margaret had put the two younger children, Annette and Michel, to bed; little Jean-Pierre was asleep in his chair, for he liked to hear us talk, and ended by going to sleep with his fat red cheek on the table. There was a high wind outside, and the sound of the shop bell from time to time hardly aroused us from our reflections, when it obliged one or the other to go and serve a customer either with oil or candles or a glass of brandy. Chauvel was pasting paper together, Margaret and I were making little paper bags, and time went slowly by. About ten, Margaret, fearing the boy might fall out of his chair, took him up and carried him off, with his head on her shoulder.

She had hardly gone upstairs when the shop-door opened wide and several individuals hurried towards us. We could see them through the small panes of

glass ; they were strangers, tall fellows in short cloaks and cocked hats, the fashion of the day, ill-looking enough. We were quite startled. One of them, the chief (he wore moustaches and carried a sword), came in, and pointing out Chauvel to the rest, said—

“This is our man. I recognise him. Arrest him !”

Chauvel turned pale, but said firmly—

“Arrest me ! For what ? . Where is your warrant ? You are aware that the 76th Article of the Constitution—the 81st Article——”

“Ha !” cried the other, “none of your pettifogging nonsense here—the time for that is gone by ! Take him, and let us be gone !”

And as I was recovering from my surprise, and rushed to snatch my sabre down from the wall, he noticed it, and said to me—

“As for you, my man, try and keep quiet, or you will get yourself into trouble. Canez, take that sword away ! The keys—where are the keys ? We must get on with our work.”

Two of these brigands seized me. While I was struggling with them a third took me by the throat, and I heard Chauvel outside call out to me as they dragged him away—

“Michel, offer no resistance—they would kill you.”

Those are the last words I ever heard that good man speak. They twisted my arms about, they struck me in the back with their knees, they searched me, and at last thrust me down into the old arm-chair.

“It is all right, I have the keys,” said the police-officer. “Let him be. But if you stir—beware !”

I was quite exhausted, and heard nothing more. I saw them opening the drawers in the bureau and the

press, taking out all the papers, and picking out some from the rest. The chief sat at our table and wrote; two others opened letters, read them, and passed them to him. The doors of the library and the shop had been left open; the fire had gone out, and it was very cold. They were still at work. In the shop they came and went, and ransacked everything. I spat blood again. I was choking with rage, grief, and despair. I could think of nothing—I was stupefied. The officer spoke, and gave his orders as if he was at home.

“Look in that box. Open this drawer. Shut that door. Is the fire out? Yes. So much the worse. Go on. Yes, I think that is all.”

The wretches had taken a bottle of brandy and some glasses out of the cupboard. They drank as they worked. They helped themselves from Chauvel's snuff-box, which was lying on the table. Well, talk of Schinderhannes! The band of Schinderhannes has neither faith, nor law, nor heart, nor honour.

They went away at last, and left me there. It may have been about one in the morning. I tried to get up—my knees trembled. At last I rose; and when I reached the library door, I saw the floor of the shop covered with snow, and the street-door wide open. I stumbled against something at my feet; I stooped down. It was Margaret! I thought she was dead; all my strength came back at once. I raised her, and carried her up to bed. She had heard her father call out. She has told me since then, “I heard my father cry, ‘Adieu, adieu, my children!’ and the carriage drove off, and I fell down.”

This is what she told me long afterwards, for she remained out of her senses for a long time between life

and death. The doctor whom I ran to fetch that same night, when he saw her, shook his head, and said—

“This is sad indeed, my poor Bastien; they are a set of scoundrels!”

He was mayor of the town, but conscience was too strong. Yes; they were a set of scoundrels!

Well, that is all I can tell you about him. Since then I have never heard anything of him. It was all over.

The children cried all night, and people came in the morning, good women came as if there had been a death in the house, to console the mourners; but no one dared to speak of Chauvel's fate—every one trembled. They were right, for Bonaparte had said at the Council of State, when tribunals and justice were mentioned, and even a special tribunal was suggested—he had said—

“The action of a court of justice would be too tardy, too circumscribed. It requires a more striking vengeance for so atrocious a crime—it must be as swift as a thunderbolt; blood must flow; there must be as many guilty shot as there were victims slain, fifteen or twenty, transport two hundred more, and profit by the circumstance to purge the Republic.

“This attempt is the work of a band of villains of Septembriseurs, in whom all the enemies of the Revolution are to be found. When the party finds its headquarters struck, and that fortune abandons its leaders, order will reign again, workmen will return to labour, and ten thousand men in France, who still stand by that party, but are susceptible of repentance, will abandon it for ever. I should be unworthy of the great task I have undertaken, and of my mission, if I did not show myself severe on this occasion. France

and Europe would laugh at a government which would allow a quarter in Paris to be ruined, or which would treat such a crime in the ordinary course of justice. We must conduct this affair as statesmen ; I am so convinced of the necessity of a severe example, that I am ready to have the villains brought before me, try them, and sign their condemnation."

Thus Bonaparte treated us who he was well aware were innocent of all connection with the infernal machine, for he afterwards condemned the real criminals, who were all Royalists in English pay, as brigands and villains. Chauvel was the villain, and Bonaparte the honest man ! He had said the same of the Five Hundred, of the Directory, and of all those of whom he wished to rid himself ; they were all scoundrels conspiring against the Republic, which he alone could save. He said the same thing afterwards of the Duke d'Enghein ; the Duke d'Enghein, in Germany, wanted to assassinate him !

One hundred and thirty-three patriots disappeared in virtue of a *senatus-consultus* of the Year IX., the first of the Consulate. In after times Bonaparte used to laugh and say that *senatus-consultus* had saved the Republic ; that since then no one had stirred ! No, no one has since stirred, not even when Russians, Germans, and English were marching on Paris. All that constitutes a nation, the love of justice, liberty, and one's country, was dead.

But I must bring this long story to an end. I pass over the peace of Amiens, which was only a suspension of arms, as was every peace under Bonaparte ; over the concordat, where the First Consul re-established bishops, religious orders, taxes for the Church, every-

thing the Revolution had abolished, and which was worth, to him, his coronation by Pie VII. at Paris. Then he really believed himself Charlemagne! Nor will I speak to you about this terrible struggle between France and England, in which Bonaparte, in trying to ruin England, reduced us all, us and our allies, to the greatest distress; nor of battles which followed one another, week after week, without ever ending; nor of the Te Deums for Austerlitz, Jena, Wagram, the Moskowa, &c. Napoleon Bonaparte was master; he took two or three hundred thousand men every year; he returned to our former conscriptions, he levied taxes, established monopolies, made proclamations, calling us "his people!" he wrote articles for the newspapers, issued decrees from the depths of Russia to organise the Théâtre-Français—in fact, it was one great comedy!

These streams of men that he raised generally passed through Phalsbourg. You should have seen and heard them after their battles and campaigns—what heroes! How they treated the citizens! You would have thought they were another race, that they were our conquerors; the lowest among them thought himself much superior to a workman or a tradesman who lived by his labour—these conquerors of conquerors, these swaggerers, from having rolled about the world, fighting, marauding, and pillaging, in Italy, Spain, Germany, and Poland, had, I may say, no home of their own; they had forgotten their province and their native village; they looked askance at father, mother, brothers, and sisters; they only thought of promotion, brandy, tobacco, and the Emperor.

I might tell you how often we had to fight and quarrel with these defenders of their country. Every

instant, notwithstanding my patience and my wife's advice, I had some disagreeable affair; and then I was obliged to take down my sword and take a turn down at Fiquet to show these insolent vagabonds that the men of '92 were not afraid of those of 1808. I can still show two small scars, which I fully returned. As to complaining to their officers, they laughed in your face, and replied—

“Oh, it's only one of La Fougère's tricks, or else La Tulipe; they are always doing so.”

That was all.

Those who come after me will repeat these facts, which are a disgrace to such a nation as ours. Russian barbarians, the Cossacks of the Don, whom we saw arrive here at their heels, were not so shamelessly insolent to respectable women and peaceable citizens. They began by plundering, and they finished by plundering. They only talked about eating and drinking well, accumulating money, and five or six years after the Italian campaigns, when the seed began to grow, you may fancy what it was like.

It has always pained me to see how easily the people follow a bad example. France is a country rich in grain, in wine, and in all sorts of products, great in its commerce, its manufactures, and its marine. We want for nothing; with work and economy we might be the happiest nation in the world. Well, that was not sufficient; we must go and plunder others; one only talked about spoils and prizes. At the opening of every campaign they calculated beforehand what it would produce, what great cities they would pass through, and what forced contributions they would levy.

While Bonaparte was dealing in provinces, giving this man Tuscany, that one the kingdom of Naples, or Holland, or Westphalia ; while he promised, broke his word, added, curtailed, or kept altogether ; while he called himself protector of these, king of those, and then gave away crowns to his brothers and his brothers-in-law ; attracted people on to our territory under the pretext of settling their affairs, like that wretched King of Spain, and then took them by the collar and cast them into prison, or else exacted armies from his allies, and then made them all prisoners, by declaring war against them ; while he was practising these atrocities, the inferior satellites laughed and rejoiced ; they thought it was well done, and took possession of candelabra, pictures, sacramental plate, &c., &c.

Fourgon after fourgon passed by, and they said—

“ They are the fourgons of such a marshal, or such a general, or such a diplomatist—they are inviolate.”

Then came the soldiers, with their pockets full of Frederics, sovereigns, and ducats. Gold abounded ! What a sad story ! After talking so much about justice and virtue, we finished like true banditti.

You know the end of it all—how all people, indignant at being plundered, fell upon us together—Russians, Germans, English, Swedes, Italians, and Spaniards—and that we were obliged to disgorge pictures, provinces, and crowns, with an indemnity of a milliard, or a thousand millions. These people held garrisons among us, they remained in our fortresses till we had paid up the last centime ; they took all the conquests the Republic had made away from us—these were real conquests ; Austria and Prussia had attacked

us unjustly ; we had conquered them, and the Austrian possessions in the Low Countries, and all the left bank of the Rhine, had become French by treaty. Well, they took these from us too, the best of our conquests ; this is what the genius of Bonaparte had done for us. But if I once get upon this chapter I shall never leave off. Let us go back to our story.

I need not tell you what Margaret and I thought of the First Consul after our father had been carried off, nor what we used to tell our children in the evening by ourselves, when we put them in mind of the good man who had been so fond of them ! My poor wife remained pale and suffering for fifteen years ; until the fall of the Empire. Then she consoled herself somewhat, when she knew Bonaparte was at Saint-Helena, on a barren rock in the midst of the ocean, with Sir Hudson Lowe. She regained her colour a little ; but what a shock it was, and, unfortunately, not the only one ; in spite of the prosperous state of our business, we often had a great blow dealt us.

In 1802, the former conventional Jean-Bon Saint-André, ci-devant member of the Committee of Public Safety, was sent by Bonaparte to Mayence to arrest, try, and execute with all despatch, a prodigious quantity of banditti who infested both sides of the Rhine. He understood this sort of thing well, and soon after a list of sixty or seventy scoundrels, headed by their captain, Schinderhannes, was affixed to the doors of our town-hall, with their several descriptions. Among the number was Nicolas Bastien ! As far as I was concerned, it was a matter of indifference to me ; I have always been of opinion that a man is only responsible

for his own actions, and I saw a hundred times that honest men and rogues, men of ability and idiots, the sober and the drunken, are to be found in the same family, and oftener than not.

So I consoled myself and my wife too. But it was a terrible blow to my poor father; from the first moment he took to his bed, and every time I went to see him at Baraques, he used to repeat—

“Ah, my good Michel, may God forgive him! but this time Nicolas has given me my death-blow!”

He cried like a child, and died suddenly in 1803. My mother, instead of coming to live quietly with us and her grandchildren, set off, and never ceased making pilgrimages to Marienthâl or elsewhere for the repose of the soul of Nicolas. Some months afterwards an old Alsatian woman of her own sort came, chaplet in hand, to tell us that my mother had passed away on a truss of straw, at Sainte-Odile; the curé had buried her like a Christian, and that neither wax tapers nor holy water were wanting. I paid for the tapers and holy water, much regretting such a dismal end, for my mother might have lived ten years longer if she would have followed my advice.

Thus our family circle grew narrower, and our friends, who dropped off one by one. After Hohenlinden we never had any further news of my old comrade Sôme he had doubtless sunk under the fatigues of the campaign. We expected a letter from him for a long time; but at the end of five or six years we felt it was all over with him. Marescot and Lisbeth, who had risen in honours, thought no more about us; they had become more Bonapartist than Bonaparte, and we had re-

mained Republicans. From time to time the gazettes gave us news of them : “ Madame la Baronne Marescot had made some purchases at such a shop ! They had set off for Spain,” &c.—in fact, they were become great people.

Maître Jean was still alive in 1809. He had given up the forge at Baraques for a long time, and lived at his fine farm at Pickeholtz with Dame Catherine, Nicole, my brother Claude, and my sister Mathurine ; every market day he drove in his char-à-bancs to get his supply of sugar, oil, and vinegar from us after he had sold his corn. He had been the more shocked at the kidnapping of Chauvel because at first he had declared for Bonaparte, on account of his love of order, and the guarantee of national property. But at the news of the misfortune, notwithstanding his habitual prudence, he was the first to hurry over to us and condole with us. He never dared to speak about Chauvel before Margaret, but whenever she left the room he used to say—

“ No news ? Never any news whatever ? ”

“ No.”

“ Ah, my God ! What a misfortune for me that I would not believe your father-in-law when he used to exclaim against that despot ! ”

Maître Jean loved our children, and every time he came he asked me to let him have one. As we then had three boys and two girls, we had almost made up our minds for the child’s sake to do so, as we knew he would be well brought up and well instructed, and that he would make a good farmer of him. One day Margaret said to me—

“ Let him have Michel—he is the strongest.”

But I replied—

“That is not the one he wants; without his telling, I am sure it is Jean-Pierre.”

“Why?”

“Because he is so like your father.”

That was the reason why Margaret wished to keep him at home; she cried a little, but at last gave way. Then every Thursday Maître Jean brought us Jean-Pierre in his *char-à-bancs*; we dined together, and were, so to say, one family. Margaret went sometimes to Pickeholtz.

In 1809 Maître Jean fell ill at the end of autumn; Jean-Pierre, then about fourteen, came to fetch me early one morning, saying Maître Jean wanted to see me, for he was very ill. I set off immediately. When I arrived at Pickeholtz, I found my old master in bed in the alcove, with large serge curtains, and at a first glance I saw that he was very ill, and, indeed, in danger.

M. Bouregard, the doctor from Sarrebourg, had been five times to see him. It was the third day of his illness, and seeing Dame Catherine crying, I guessed what the doctor had said.

Maître Jean could not speak, but when he saw me he pointed to the drawer of his night-table, and signed to me with his lips to open it.

I opened it. In the drawer there was a paper written entirely with his own hand.

“For Chauvel’s grandchildren,” said he, with a violent effort.

And I saw tears running down his cheeks. He could hardly breathe, and still wanted to say something, but

he could only press my hand. I was very much distressed, and as his breathing became more difficult every moment, I saw that he would soon be in the agonies of death. He had waited till I came, which not unfrequently occurs. He turned about; ten minutes afterwards, sitting by the bedside, and hearing no sound, I called him—

“*Maître Jean !*”

There was no reply; his kind face was already growing pale, his lips opened gently with a smile; you would have thought you saw him at the forge when Valentine had said something silly, and he was looking at him, and shrugging his shoulders.

I cannot tell you how distressed we all were. No, these are but ordinary occurrences in life; let every one recall the death of those he has loved the most! For me, all my youthful memories represented by my second father were leaving me; to Dame Catherine he had been the best of husbands, fifty years of domestic peace and happiness; he was a good master to all his servants, a friend to humanity and justice.

Here I stop. This is the end of my history; my turn will come soon; I must rest and collect myself a little before I go to rejoin all the old friends I have been telling you of.

Maître Jean-Leroux left to Margaret and me, “For the grandchildren of his friend *Chauvel*, his farm of *Pickholtz*, on condition of considering Dame Catherine as our mother, of keeping *Nicole*, *Claude*, and *Mathurine* to the end of their days, and of sometimes thinking of him.”

These conditions were not very hard to keep: they

were already written in our hearts. Shortly afterwards Margaret, the children, and myself went to live at the farm, having made over our business to my brother Stephen. Since then I have always cultivated our land, have bought more, and prospered by so doing. See what I said in my first chapter.

And now I pray God may grant us all some years more of health and quiet. If, in addition, we had the rights of man, I should die content.



